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"They never stop, these Stepford wives. They something something all their lives. Work like robots. Yes, that would fit. They work like robots all their lives."

—Ira Levin,
The Stepford Wives

COVER

When the flesh is weak but the spirit is strong, it's time to replace the flesh with sturdier stuff. Artist Kyle J. Anderson shows us what magic and madness hath wrought in "Kambranex's Machinations."

THE AGENDA

BEFORE I GET TO THE REAL SUBJECT of this month's editorial, I'd like to mention the new format you've probably already noticed. As you can see, we've adopted the core book page layout as the "new look" of *DUNGEON Magazine*. The way I figure it, all those other companies are aping the look of the outside of the books, so we needed to grab the inside look before anyone could beat us to it.

If you have comments or questions about the new look, feel free to send them to dungeon@wizards.com or mail them via snail mail.

Anyway, on to the point of this page. . . .

As those of you who attended the *DRAGON* and *DUNGEON Magazine* writer's workshop at the GEN CON Game Fair this year can attest, I have a formula I like to encourage new writers to follow when they're trying to write adventures for *DUNGEON*. The first step in the process involves coming up with a cool villain or a unique location. Once you have your villain, the second step is coming up with a cool evil agenda for him or her to follow. After all, where would Sauron be without his lust for the ring? Where would the Emperor be without his desire to crush the Rebellion and rule the universe? And where would Gargamel be without his craving for little Smurfs that he could turn into gold?

I'll tell you where these great villains would be: Nowhere.

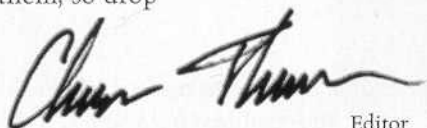
You DMs should be nodding your heads about now, thinking, "Yes, it's the agenda that makes the villain. It's not just that he's a half-fiend or that his parents beat him with the gravy ladle as a child. It's the desire in his heart to commit evil." (Those of you who aren't nodding, just go along with the rest of us so we feel better.)

So when I joined Chris Perkins's Arveniar campaign a few months ago and began to immerse myself in his incredibly complex world, I began to realize something: Agendas aren't only for the bad guys.

That's right! PCs can have them too. In fact, we DMs should be encouraging our players to do this very thing. Let me give you an example why: Our two wee folk in the campaign, Herumann the gnome and Tweedle the halfling, have very simple agendas: They want to make some money and stay alive. These might seem like obvious goals, but by putting them at the forefront of their minds in the form of an agenda, they tend to have an impact on almost everything the characters do. Tweedle won't put himself in the line of fire if he thinks he can't win, and Herumann starts to drool if someone even mentions the words "money" or "gems."

My character, the half-dragon Ix, is a soldier, and his whole schtick is winning the war that's raging in Arveniar for the good guys. As a result, my character tends to butt heads with the more pragmatic adventurers in the group, like Tweedle and Herumann, which leads to interesting character interactions and more fun all around. Our agendas have made us a tighter party as a result, since we learn to work our way around our characters' personal goals for the betterment of the group, and hopefully Arveniar, as well.

So how about you? Do your players' PCs have personal agendas? We'd sure love to hear about them, so drop us a line and fill us in.



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DUPLICATION STINKS

I just got Issue #89 and before I read it I pulled out the monster tokens to see what new ones I'd received. I'm sorry to say that I was a little disappointed. I noticed that some of the tokens had doubles on that sheet. I can understand printing doubles from issue to issue as some people might buy one issue and not the next, but doubles in one issue? It's so easy to run down to the nearest copy shop and run off a few. I think it might be better if you added ones that aren't in the magazine but people might use regularly (different demons or celestials), or print off ones for the next issue if you won't have space to put them all on the cardboard sheet, (like in Issue #86, when some tokens were different on the inside sheet than on the outside). I realize that I'm contradicting myself, but even if you had to print more tokens on the inside, regular subscribers would get the cardboard ones from the previous issue. Despite all this, I still love your magazine.

**Heather
Trenton, Ontario**

Even though this letter addresses something from two issues ago, I wanted to respond, since Heather has a valid point. So here goes: I've actually deliberately printed duplicate monsters on past monster token sheets, due to the fact that certain monsters tend to appear in large numbers. After all, critters like orcs, goblins, and bugbears tend to be "pack" animals; you rarely seem to encounter just one. I fully realize that with the quality of color copiers today, taking your monster tokens to the local copy center isn't difficult. I do know, though, that you're not liable to get your copied monster chits on the quality card stock we print them on. And picking paper monster tokens off a table is a pain in the rump, in my opinion. As a DM, I prefer the card stock versions, so I figured that's what my readers would prefer. I'd like to hear more input from the readership, so let me know what you think.

As an aside, I'd like to point out that although there aren't monster tokens with this issue, they will be back with Issue #92.

EXPERT IN THE MAKING

I am a novice DM at a local sci-fi store in my town and I just finished running "The Raiders of Galath's Roost" in my once-a-month gaming time, and I must say that it was a very interesting adventure.

I had Rossal (the acorn-throwing pseudodragon) follow the group around and help them little just to add some flavor. Once they got into the citadel, they killed off most of the head bosses rather easily so just to end it quickly I sent the remaining guys in waves to attack them. I even had to bump up two of the bosses just to challenge the PCs.

I just want to say that I think that your magazine is great and I will be using many of the modules in my games as my player's characters grow.

**James Bossie
Via Email**

ICY QUERY

Hello! I've been a reader of *DUNGEON* since Issue #5, and I must say that the new course of the magazine really rocks. My only complaint is about the cover: All that writing ruins the effect of the picture without conveying any useful information.

I write because I have two questions about the module "Glacier Season" published in *DUNGEON* #87.

Why is Taigiel's alignment listed as NE? Nothing in the text suggests that he could be anything but good. Is this an error?

Many points in the text suggest that an ice golem can fly, but the monster's sheet at the end of the module doesn't list this ability. How fast and how good can an ice golem fly?

Apologies if you already answered to these question in #88, but I lost it.

**Marco Passarello
Milano (Italia)**

Although we don't particularly care to clutter our covers either—being big fans of all our cover artists, and all—we have to make an attempt to draw new readers in, and cover lines are a part of that strategy. As for your questions,

yes, Taigiel is in fact supposed to be neutral good, and no, ice golems can't fly. Our apologies for the confusion.

PULP PROBLEMS?

While I thought that the *Pulp Heroes* game was a great idea, and had a lot of good points and excellent innovations, It has a large number of problems, major and minor, which conspire to make the game difficult to run or play. First, I was unable to find any explanation of the "Defense Bonus." I suppose that it is a balancing feature that is to be added to AC to account for the lack of magical armor, and so on, but that is just my best guess. Also lacking is an explanation of how to calculate the DC of a save for a scientist's invention. There is no information on this. Does it work like a wand? Is it a function of the scientist's Intelligence?

In addition to these oversights, there are some design flaws as well. First, there is no rule to cover weapon quality, and thus nothing distinguishes a rusty kitchen knife from a finely crafted combat knife. Then, what about guns that have magazines allowing more than one shot or round before reloading? Apparently, you have to reload all the firearms after a single shot.

Lastly and most importantly is a final, critical problem with the scientist class: The scientist must invest XP to make his inventions. This has two major consequences: First, in order to have, at some point, made a single copy of each of the inventions he knows at the lowest possible scientist level, a scientist would have to pay more than 50,000 XP! Either he will learn large amounts of useless knowledge that he never even thinks about applying, or he slows his advancement down to a snail's crawl.

Even a lowly 1st-level inventor making a lone copy of his one invention must pay 30 XP. Since he begins play with 0 XP, he must tackle his first adventure with no powers! With the worst vitality points and combat skills in the game, a starting inventor is useless!

Please fix these problems, perhaps by posting corrections on the web or putting them in the next issue. It is extremely frustrating to see a game system with so much potential, but be unable to play effectively because of problems like these. And please do not print another d20 system with such glaring flaws.

MagisterDraconis@aol.com

The Pulp Heroes game does not, in fact, include as much information on Defense as it should. Readers familiar with the STAR WARS roleplaying game likely passed right over it as old hat, but others are right to be a little confused.

Here's how it works:

DEFENSE

There is no Armor Class in *Pulp Heroes*. Instead, characters have a Defense rating. Defense is determined by adding the following numbers: 10 + class bonus + Dex bonus + size bonus + any miscellaneous bonus. The total, called the character's Defense, represents the number an opponent must achieve when attacking the character.

If a character wears armor, instead of adding to the Defense, the armor provides damage reduction to wound damage.

To determine the save DC for a scientist's invention, simply follow the rules for magic item save DCs as found in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. It's important to remember that while *POLYHEDRON* presents d20 System mini-games, those games still follow the core d20 mechanics unless the rules explicitly state otherwise.

As for weapon quality, not even the core *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* rules differentiate between a rusty dagger and a pristine (but not quite masterwork) dagger. Asking for such minute detail from a mini-game is somewhat akin to complaining that a television commercial didn't have a satisfying denouement.

Pages 52 and 53 cover your firearm concerns. Note the "ammo" listing for each firearm. That is the number of times a weapon can be fired before it must be reloaded. The submachinegun can be fired more than once per round, but there are special rules for doing so. Should you wish to adopt those rules for the full machinegun, that's certainly a reasonable choice.

As for that scientist who's spent more than 50,000 xp on discoveries? He has 1,700 charges of what amounts to magic wands (of various levels) to fire off over his career. Not bad, considering the price. A much more likely scenario is that he does not, in fact, make a copy of every invention he imagines in his head.

Generous GMs might wish to give starting scientists a free 1st-level invention. Asking the character to survive a single adventure, on the other hand, probably isn't too difficult a request. The scientist's skills will certainly help on a beginning adventure, and if things go right, the events of that experience might lead to the scientist's first "eureka moment."

We hope this information helps you out, Magister, and that you find the *Shadow Chasers* mini-game in the other half of this magazine less rife with "glaring" flaws.

Erik Mona
Editor

POLYHEDRON Magazine

"Letters" continued on page 85



CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS IV

BY JOHNATHAN M. RICHARDS

ARTWORK BY KENNON JAMES AND KYLE HUNTER • CARTOGRAPHY BY KYLÉ HUNTER

| Magic Items Monsters NPCs Objects Settlements Traps

"Challenge of Champions IV" is a D&D adventure for a party of four PCs of any level and any character class. Like the first three "Challenge of Champions" adventures (appearing in Issues #58, #69, and #80), this adventure takes place on the outskirts of a major city and can be inserted into nearly any campaign.

You should read the entire adventure before running it. A firm understanding of each of the ten scenarios is necessary for the smooth progress of the adventure and will help you adjudicate alternative solutions the players might devise to each challenge.

BACKGROUND

For the fourth year, the local Adventurers Guild is sponsoring an event to test the skills of teams of adventurers. The contest is open to adventuring teams of all levels of experience.

The contest is to be held in two days' time at the edge of the city. Teams have already begun forming and registering for the contest. Some have gone through one or more of the previous Challenges of Champions, while others are new to the contest.

Each team must be registered at the guild headquarters in the city by sundown the night before the contest. The team members must each provide the guild with their name, character class (for record-keeping purposes only, since the scenarios are no longer geared toward specific character classes), and team name. They must also sign a form absolving the Adventurers Guild of any responsibility in case of injury or death. Contestants are given the opportunity to sign up in advance for either a *raise dead* spell (950 gp) or a *resurrection* spell (1,410 gp), to be used in the event of their death during the course of the Challenge. (The guild officials explain that the final

scenario is potentially lethal this year.) PCs wishing to use this service must pay in advance; the money is returned at the end of the event if they come through unscathed.

Finally, all contestants must pay the entrance fee of 5 gp unless they're already guild members, in which case the fee is waived (a benefit of membership, as the guild is quick to point out). If the PCs aren't yet members, they get to hear the standard sales pitch: For a mere 25 gp per year, the Adventurers Guild provides the PCs with a wealth of information, including beneficial contacts and a slight discount on standard adventuring gear. Other benefits can be added as you see fit. Possibilities include offering expendable magic items (scrolls and potions) at a reasonable cost, as well as providing a place to sell the various treasures recovered while adventuring.

The four winners of the contest are each granted a lifetime membership in the Adventurers Guild, as well as the trophies and prestige associated with such an honor.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

A team of four PCs enters the Challenge of Champions, a competition composed of ten scenarios testing their adventuring capabilities. At the end of the contest, the scores of all contestants are ranked to determine the winning team.

CHARACTER HOOKS

The PCs could enter the contest for several reasons. They might overhear other adventurers talking about the fourth annual Challenge of Champions and decide to enter on their own. One of their rivals

might form a team of contestants and dare the PCs to enter the contest to see which team performs better. If the PCs have already joined the Adventurers Guild, they might have competed in a previous Challenge and be eager to give it another go. A newly formed adventuring band might enter the Challenge to establish a reputation, possibly as advertisement for future employment.

FOR THE DM

The contest itself is a series of ten scenarios, each designed to test the resourcefulness and cohesion of the adventuring group. The scenarios are set up so as to be of equal difficulty to everyone, regardless of level. In other words, a 20th-level sorcerer should have no advantage over a 1st-level one. In addition, an attempt has been made to negate any advantage those contestants who went through previous Challenges of Champions might have over those who are experiencing the contest for the first time.

THE RULES

Team members must show up in regular clothing (armor is not permitted). Weapons cannot be brought to the contest grounds; those scenarios involving weapons have them prepositioned. The same goes for magic items of any type. Spellcasters cannot cast any spells they've prepared on their own; all spells used in the contest must be cast using the *rings of spell storing* provided as part of a scenario. This allows all spells to be cast at the same level, negating any advantage high-level spellcasters have over low-level ones. Contestants are not allowed to take items used in one scenario to any others. Those spellcasters with familiars are not allowed to bring them into the contest, nor can druids or rangers bring their animal companions.

All PCs are inspected by a guild wizard using *detect magic*, and those attempting to smuggle magic items into the contest are immediately disqualified. Likewise, the guild proctors have no qualms against ejecting contestants who try casting unauthorized spells during the scenarios. (Some spellcasters think they can sneak a spell past the proctors if they use their Silent Spell, Still Spell, and/or Quicken Spell metamagic feats. No one's managed to successfully pull it off yet, though.) Finally, the use of psionic powers is prohibited during the scenarios.

An unscrupulous adventuring group might devise an elaborate plan to circumvent the rules. For example, a group might plant one of their party members in an earlier group. When the spy makes it through the scenarios, he or she can use the *sending* spell to communicate the solution or clues (if the early

group didn't solve the scenario) to the later group. Such devious tactics shouldn't be "automatically" detected. If the PCs are clever enough to outsmart the Adventurers Guild's thorough precautions, they'll probably be seen as a boon to the organization anyway. If characters manage to pull off a cheat you didn't expect, try not to punish them outright. This is a contest of wits and ingenuity, and finding a novel way to circumvent tricky obstacles is part of what being an adventurer is all about.

A PC attempting to smuggle an illegal object into a scenario can make a Pick Pocket check opposed by the searching guild member's Search check, with a -4 penalty as all guild members are wary of such shenanigans. Items receive a bonus to the Pick Pockets check at determined by their size (+1 for Small, +2 for Tiny, +4 for Diminutive, and so on). PCs who cheat and are caught after the fact are removed from the Challenge and their points are nullified from all scenarios in which they participated. The remaining PCs are free to recruit a replacement member before continuing with the rest of the contest.

At the start of each scenario, the official (a member of the Adventurers Guild overseeing the proper operation of that particular scenario) briefs the team on the starting equipment they can use, and the team can inventory the items to ensure everything is in place. Command words to any magic items requiring them are normally provided at this time (unless determining the command word is part of the puzzle). Once the team is satisfied that all equipment is in place, the official begins reading the briefing, and the clock starts ticking. The briefing consists of the goal the team must try to accomplish, as well as any special rules for that scenario. The team has 15 minutes to accomplish each scenario.

THE HINT

A new addition to this year's Challenge of Champions is the introduction of "The Hint." If a team is stumped as to how to complete the goal of a given scenario, they can ask for "The Hint," and the guild proctor then reads them a prepared statement that should give them a clue as to how best to proceed. The team can ask for "The Hint" at any time during the scenario, but it must be a unanimous decision by all team members (or at least those team members who haven't been declared "dead" for that scenario). Once "The Hint" has been given, the team can earn a maximum of only half the normal points for completing the scenario goal (5 points per surviving character instead of the normal 10). In the unlikely event that one or more PCs successfully complete the scenario goal before the rest of the team decides to invoke "The Hint," they earn their full 10 points,

while those completing the goal after the reading of "The Hint" each receive 5 points. Note also that the specifics of "The Hint" for each scenario have already been decided by the guild proctors, and thus it's possible that "The Hint" might address a part of the scenario that the contestants have already figured out on their own.

WHEN TO RUN THE ADVENTURE

If your players' adventuring group does not have a full complement of four team members, the PCs can recruit one or more NPCs from the hopefuls milling about the contest. See the "Rounding Out the Team" sidebar for more information.

A word of caution: Although this adventure can be played with one DM and one player (with the player running all four team members), that puts the onus of coming up with solutions on the lone player. This isn't unfeasible; it's just easier to solve the scenarios with input and ideas from several people. The odds of a team doing well increases with the number of active players participating.

On the other hand, this adventure can be used on a night when some players can't make it to the gaming session. Rather than have someone else run their characters in their absence or go on an adventure without their PCs as part of the team, you can split the four NPCs in the "Rounding Out the Team" sidebar between the players who are available and use them as a competing team. That way, those players who didn't make it to the gaming session don't have their PCs lagging behind in experience points.

RUNNING THE SCENARIOS

At the beginning of each scenario, show the players the map or diagram corresponding to that event (permission is granted to photocopy these player handouts for personal use only). Allow the players to read the appropriate spells in the *Player's Handbook* and magic item entries in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, but remind them that not all of the starting equipment is necessarily needed to complete each scenario's goal. Once all of the players have had a chance to review their starting equipment, give them the task briefing. Once the briefing begins, track the time. The players have 15 minutes for their PCs to accomplish the task. This is 15 minutes in real time, not "game time." (This system is much easier than tracking all 150 rounds in each 15-minute period for each of the 10 scenarios.) However, some tasks the PCs must perform to complete a scenario goal take a bit of time, and for those tasks the approximate time to complete them is provided, often with a modifier, under the heading "Time Constraints." Whenever a

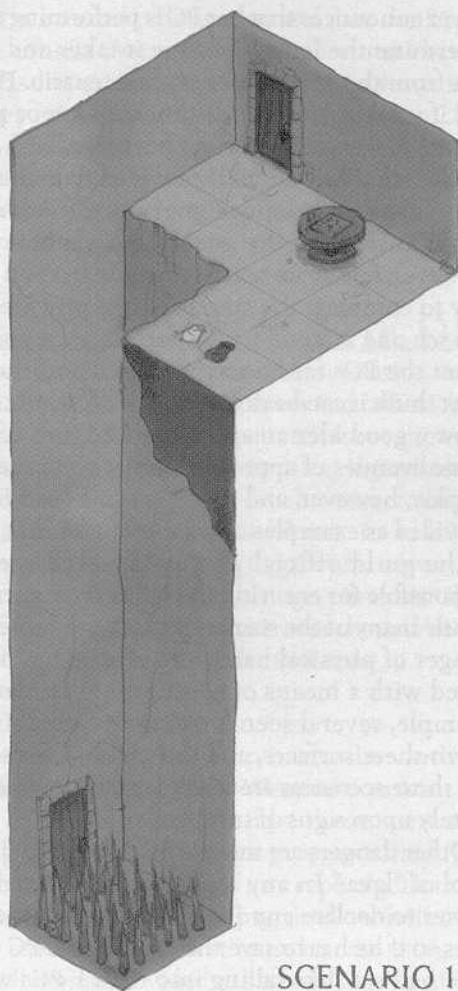
player announces that her PC is performing that task, determine the length of time it takes and subtract that from the 15 minutes of the scenario. For example, if it takes 30 seconds to secure a rope properly, tell the players that time has been used.

The "school solution" is provided to each scenario. This is the way the designers at the Adventurers Guild anticipate the goal will be accomplished. However, it is by no means the only, or even the best, way to complete the scenario. It is provided so you can see one method to accomplish each goal, in the event the PCs fail to accomplish it and the players don't think it can be done. Be flexible in all cases, and allow a good idea an appropriate chance of success. Some avenues of approach are not good methods to employ, however, and many specific "bad ideas" are provided as examples of what won't work.

The guild official proctoring each scenario is responsible for ensuring the safety of its participants. While many of the scenarios place the contestants in danger of physical harm, the official has been provided with a means of countering that danger; for example, several scenarios involve climbing up or down sheer surfaces, and the guild wizards proctoring those scenarios are ready to cast *feather fall* immediately upon signs of trouble.

Other dangers are more artificial, like falling into a pool of "lava." In any scenario, the official has the power to declare any PC "dead" at any time, and he does so if he has to save the PC or if the PC commits a "lethal" act (like falling into "lava"). PCs who have been declared "dead" are not allowed to participate further in the scenario in which they "died," and they receive no points for that scenario. They are allowed to watch their teammates finish the scenario without them, but any assistance on their part, whether it be actual participation in accomplishing the scenario's goal or even shouting suggestions from the sidelines (this includes the "dead" character's player offering advice to the other players) are grounds for disqualification of the entire team. Once the team moves on to the next scenario, any "dead" PCs are restored to "living" status and continue as before.

Many of the scenarios are puzzles. As part of the spirit of the Challenge of Champions, you should require your players to figure out the solution themselves. After all, figuring out the solutions is the whole point of these scenarios. However, most people roleplay to play their characters, not themselves; the PCs have "lived" entirely different lives and have memories of entirely different experiences than the players. In each scenario, some potential uses for skills are provided if your players begin to get frustrated or they ask you whether one of their skill might help. Skill checks are generally



SCENARIO 1

unnecessary to successfully complete a scenario, but they can help give PCs a clue.

As the PCs complete each scenario, record their scores on the score sheet provided. This makes it easier for the players to see how they are doing, and more importantly, lets you tally the final scores when the fourth annual Challenge of Champions is over.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players when their characters are ready to begin:

The day of the contest, the teams are led to the large, multicolored tent where the initial briefings are given. This year, there are a total of 15 teams competing. Before the contest officially begins, some of the teams pass around a sign-up sheet for a betting pool. Not all teams have entered the pool, and there is no pressure to do so, but those interested are putting up 100 gold pieces per team, and the winners (among those in the pool) go home with the pot. "This year, I'm sure to win," declares

Bisquayne, a long-time competitor, as he hands you the sign-up sheet for the betting pool. "Care to contribute to my winnings?"

The betting pool has become a tradition among many of the Challenge of Champions competitors. Since the Adventurers Guild has no interest in providing monetary rewards for winning (that's not why they've designed the contests), several contestants have taken it upon themselves to provide their own cash reward. The betting pool serves as a sort of "back-up prize" as well—even if the PCs don't win the contest this time around, there's a chance they might at least get to take home some money. So far, nine of the teams have each put in 100 gp, so if the PCs decide to enter, the pot will be 1,000 gp. Of course, since the contestants aren't allowed to bring anything with them to the contest, none of the teams actually have the money with them, but the other teams help ensure that the losers pay up when the contest is over. Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs have had a chance to interact with some of the other contestants and made a decision whether to participate in the betting pool:

Farthingale, the heavy-set guildmaster officially running the Challenge of Champions, shows up at the tent and everyone gets down to business. Farthingale goes over all of the ground rules and answers any initial questions. After that, each team's name is entered on a slip of paper, and the names are drawn randomly out of a small chest to determine the order in which the teams will compete. Your team is number ten.

At this point, go over all of the rules with the players and answer any questions they might have. Once the players are ready to proceed, and assuming none of the PCs plan on smuggling illicit items into the contest, read or paraphrase the following:

Team #1 is led away to start. You are left to wait until your team's turn; with over 2 hours to kill, you amuse yourselves by wandering through the guild's display tents, examining various weapons, armor, and adventuring gear. Everywhere you go, people offer you their best wishes in the upcoming event. Finally, you are approached by a guild page. "It's about that time," he says, and escorts you to the starting tent. Inside, you are greeted by two guild members: a thin-faced wizard named Kuthbar, who casts *detect magic* on your team in search of illicit magic items, and a red-bearded fighter named Jayme, who gives everyone a thorough frisk, looking for smuggled items like lockpicks.

If any of the PCs have tried sneaking forbidden items into the contest, they're probably discovered at this point (see "Rules" above for information on how to conceal hidden items) and ejected from the Challenge without being reimbursed their entrance fees. (Money paid in advance for *resurrection* or *raise dead* spells is returned, however.) Allow guild officials time to take 20 on Search checks, and don't be afraid to give them hefty circumstance bonuses. A player whose PC is ejected can use one of the four extra PCs in the "Rounding Out the Team" sidebar instead of his normal character. This also allows the other team members (those who didn't try to cheat) to compete in the Challenge rather than be disqualified along with their foolish partner.

Read or paraphrase the boxed text for the first scenario when the PCs are ready to begin.

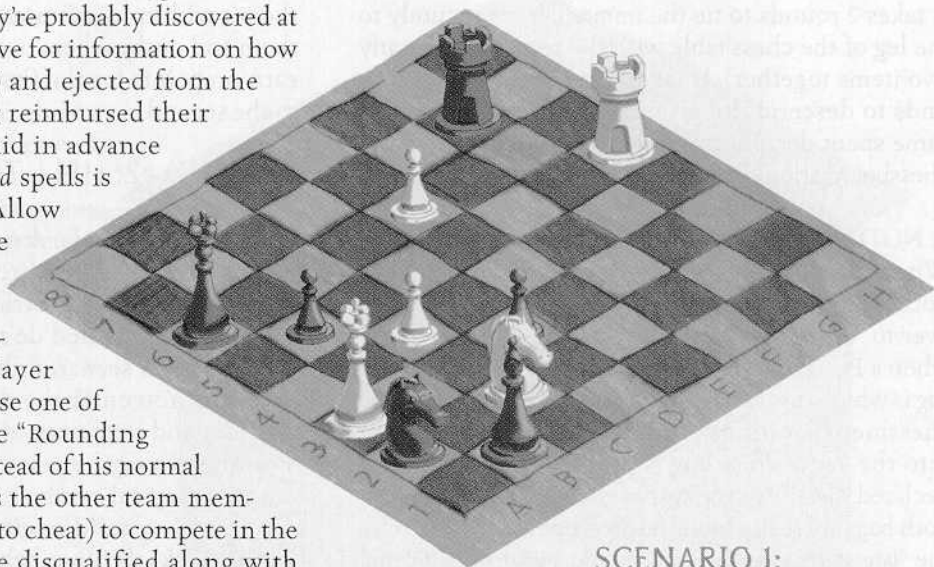
SCENARIO #1: CHESS, ANYONE?

Jayne leads you through a door and into a 20-foot-square room. A 10-foot-square pit occupies one corner and a round chess table, some 4 feet wide, the other. There you are met by Julian, the guild wizard in charge of the first scenario. "Good day to you," he says. "Your starting equipment consists of two bags in the corner: one black, one white. One is a *bag of devouring*; the other a *bag of holding* (type I). It's up to you to determine which is which, but the *bag of holding* contains an *immovable rod* and a 10-foot length of rope. Both should prove useful in accomplishing your task: namely, getting safely to the bottom of the 50-foot-deep pit.

"The sides of the pit are completely smooth, so any attempt to climb down is sure to end in failure. Also, please note the spikes at the bottom of the pit, which we've taken the liberty of coating with a deadly contact poison. If you can get down there safely, you should be able to walk carefully around the spikes, but I wouldn't advise just jumping in. In fact, I can pretty much guarantee that anyone jumping in without a way of slowing their fall will be declared dead for the rest of the scenario."

"If you don't feel up to the challenge, perhaps you'd rather spend the next 15 minutes playing a quick game of chess? No? Then you may begin."

The room and pit are both lit by *continual flame* spells. The 4-foot-diameter chess table is wooden and supported by a single, sturdy, central leg. The chess-



SCENARIO 1:
PLAYER'S HANDOUT

board is painted on the tabletop, with the pieces set up as if in the middle of a game (see accompanying diagram). Neither of the two magical bags bears any distinguishing marks.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the exit door at the bottom of the pit by the end of the time limit.

SOLUTION

The PCs observe the placement of the chess pieces on the board, reading off each piece of the same color in sequence, from low numbers to high. The black pieces spell out the words "bad bag," while the white pieces spell out "cache." The PCs open the white *bag of holding* and remove the *immovable rod* and the rope. Tying the rod securely to the side of the table leg, one PC holds the chess table over the edge of the pit and activates the *immovable rod*. While the table hangs motionless in midair above the pit, one PC climbs onto the table's leg, sitting cross-legged, while the other three PCs pile onto the top of the table. The PC on the leg deactivates and reactivates the *immovable rod* in short bursts, allowing the table to drop only a few feet at a time, and the PCs make it to the bottom of the pit in that fashion. Once at the bottom of the pit, they carefully make their way past the spikes and out the door.

The walls are smooth enough to be considered unclimbable (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 65).

THE HINT

"There is a clue in the placement of the chess pieces."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

It takes 2 rounds to tie the *immovable rod* securely to the leg of the chess table with the rope (or to tie any two items together). It takes about 1 minute 30 seconds to descend the pit on the table as described. Time spent deciphering the hidden message on the chessboard should be accounted literally.

DM NOTES

When the PCs open either of the two magic bags, nothing can be seen inside. Similarly, turning the bags over to “dump” their contents has no effect; it’s only when a PC reaches into a bag that they’ll know which bag is which (unless they solve the clues hidden in the chessmen’s locations on the board). A PC reaching into the bag of devouring is pulled into the bag and declared “dead” for the rest of the scenario. (Actually, both bags are really bags of holding, but the black one—the “bag of devouring”—has a guild wizard positioned inside it, ready to pull in any PC who reaches inside the bag.) Of course, once a team member has been “devoured,” it should be obvious to the other players that the white bag is the one they want.

If the PCs think to turn the bags inside out (and do so without reaching a hand inside the “bag of devouring”), the contents spill out of the bag of holding and are accessible for use. The black bag spills out the guild wizard hidden inside, but he wears a ring of invisibility and instantly teleports out of the chamber with a spell readied with the Silent Spell feat.

The rope is only 10 feet long—long enough to tie the *immovable rod* in place but little use in climbing down the 50-foot-deep pit.

A monk of 8th level or higher can use her slow fall ability to jump down the pit without harm; by keeping in touch with the wall of the pit, she’ll avoid landing on a spike, which are clustered toward the center. This, of course, allows her to earn 10 points for the scenario but does nothing toward aiding her teammates. Anyone else jumping (or falling) into the pit has a *feather fall* spell cast upon them by Julian and is declared “dead” for the rest of the scenario—a victim of the poisoned spikes. This includes clever PCs who try climbing into the bag of holding and having another team member drop them into the pit; in such cases, the guild proctor declares the bag of holding (it holds up to 250 pounds) pierced by a spike and ruptured, destroying its contents and causing anyone inside it at the time to achieve “dead” status. Note that occupants who do not exceed the bag’s 250-pound cargo limit can hold their breaths and ride down in the bag using the tactic described in the solution. Naturally, the spikes aren’t really coated in poison, nor are they even really there; they are permanent images cast by guild wizards.

If the PCs are unable to get safely to the bottom of the pit within 15 minutes, Julian casts *feather fall* on them and pushes them over the edge of the pit. They earn no points for the first scenario and are sent on to the second.

SCENARIO #2: HELL TO PAY

Walking through the door at the bottom of the pit, you are met by a guild rogue named Luther who escorts you down a corridor to the next scenario. “You just descended down one pit,” he declares. “For the next scenario, the goal is to climb out of another.” You enter the door at the far end of the corridor and step into a 20-foot-square room with a prominent magic circle etched into the floor. All sorts of magical symbols surround the circle, and five burning candles provide the illumination. Luther locks the door behind him.

“Okay, here’s the situation,” he explains. “You’re in the unenviable position of being at the bottom of this 30-foot-deep pit, where an evil necromancer performs his unholy rituals. Fifteen minutes from now, an osyluth devil will appear in the middle of the magic circle and receive his payment for prior services rendered. The payment consists of 500 pieces of gold, kept in one of these unlocked chests”—here Luther indicates two small treasure chests lined up against one wall—“as well as four metal flasks of *sovereign glue*, kept in the other chest. Oh, and of course anyone still in this room when he appears. I’d do my best to make sure that you’re not here when the barbed devil shows up, as his appetite is noteworthy. Of course, judging from the smoothness of these walls, climbing them is going to be difficult at best. Still, see what you can do. Good luck!”

The room is illuminated by five burning candles spaced equidistant around the 18-foot-diameter magic circle etched into the floor. In addition, some light spills from the top of the pit.

The two chests are identical—each 2 feet long, 1 foot deep, and 1 foot tall. The room has no ceiling.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it up and out of the room by the end of the 15-minute time limit.

SOLUTION

The PCs open the chests and pour the gold pieces on the floor. They open up the vials of *sovereign glue*, drip a drop onto each coin in turn and stack them onto each other, making stacks of 50 coins. A pile of 50 coins glued together forms a cylinder a little

SCENARIO 2

over 6 inches long; ten coin cylinders can be produced from the golden trove.

The PCs then use the *sovereign glue* to adhere one of the chests upside-down to the side of one of the walls as high up as they can reach. Getting a boost up from his companions, PC #1 steps onto the makeshift platform thus created. The other PCs pass up the other chest and the "coin cylinders," and PC #1 uses the *sovereign glue* to adhere them to the wall as well, creating another platform out of the second chest and a series of handholds and footholds that allow the PCs to climb up the wall and over the top.

The walls of the pit are unclimbable, as they were in Scenario #1.

THE HINT

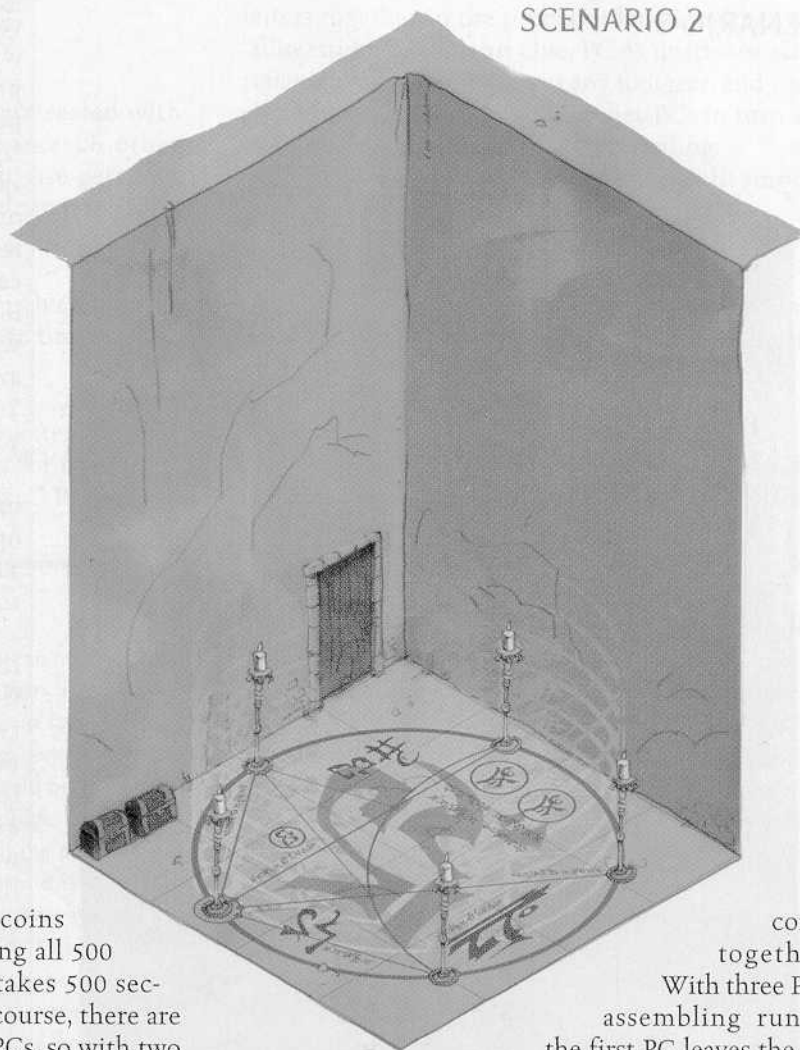
"You might not have a ladder, but at least you have the rungs."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Assume it takes 1 second to glue coins together per coin involved, so gluing all 500 coins into "rungs" of a set length takes 500 seconds, or 8 minutes, 20 seconds. Of course, there are four vials of *sovereign glue* and four PCs, so with two PCs at work gluing coins together, it takes 4 minutes, 10 seconds; three PCs can do complete the task in 2 minutes, 47 seconds; four PCs take 2 minutes, 5 seconds. It takes a full round for the *sovereign glue* to set, but this occurs while other coins are being glued to the top of a stack; by the time all of the rungs are ready to be used, the *sovereign glue* will have set.

When gluing the "ladder" into place along the wall, assume it takes 1 round to glue a "rung" (whether a stack of glued coins or a chest) in place and another to climb up onto it. Thus, it takes the PC doing the gluing 24 rounds (2 minutes, 24 seconds) to form a "ladder" of twelve rungs. The other PCs can then climb up at half their speed (see the Climb skill rules on pages 64–65 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Thus, if only one PC assembles the "rungs" together, he can be out of the pit in a total of 10 minutes, 44 seconds. The other PCs would then climb up at half their normal movement rates. If there were two characters building rungs, the first PC could be out of the pit in 6 minutes, 34 seconds after he first started gluing the



coins together.

With three PCs assembling rungs, the first PC leaves the pit after 5 minutes, 11 seconds.

With all four PCs assisting in the "rung assembly line," it takes 4 minutes, 29 seconds for the first PC to climb out of the pit.

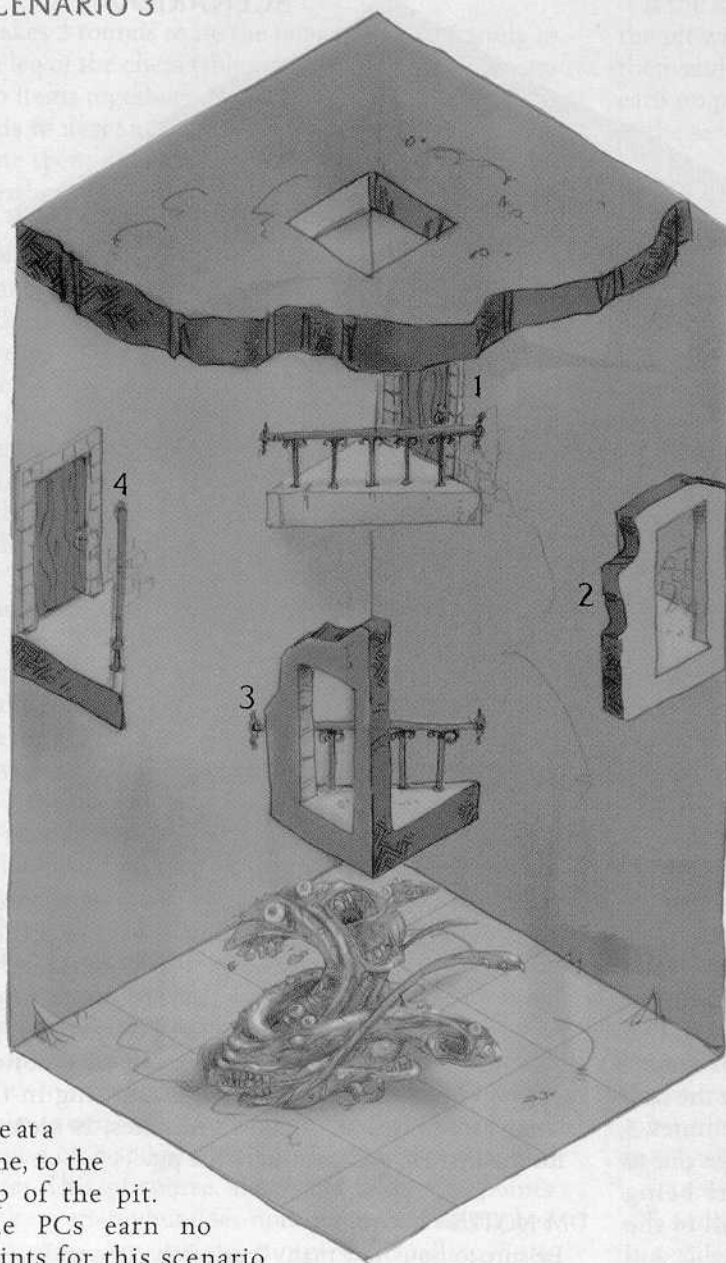
DM NOTES

Be sure to note how many "rungs" the PCs make, and ask the players how high they're gluing each "rung." With careful planning, they won't run out of "rungs" before they reach the top of the pit.

PCs using shorter "coin-rungs" (for example, if they opt to make 50 "rungs" of only 10 coins each) might require a Climb skill check (DC 10) to climb to the top. Failure by 5 or more points signifies that they fall off, taking 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen.

At the end of the time limit, an osyluth materializes in the middle of the magic circle, as promised. (Again, it's just a *polymorphed* guild wizard.) If the PCs haven't exited the room by then, he points to each in turn and says, "Okay, you're dead, and you're dead, and you're dead, and you're dead," then flies them,

SCENARIO 3



one at a time, to the top of the pit. The PCs earn no points for this scenario and are sent to the next.

Levitating Adventurers Guild workers use *universal solvent* at the end of each team's passage through Scenario #2 to restore the starting equipment to its original condition and location before the next adventuring team begins this scenario.

SCENARIO #3: ARE THOSE TEETH REAL?

Exiting the second scenario, you are met by a guild wizard named Mussfinch. "The next scenario calls for you to split up," he informs you. "I'll need you to designate yourselves as team members 1, 2, 3, and 4."

Once you've decided who's who, he continues: "You'll each be taken to a different platform along

the four corners of a large room, where you'll each find a single potion vial. I won't tell you which potion is which—that's for you to figure out—but one is a *potion of spider climb*, one's a *potion of blur*, one's a *potion of water walk*, and the last is a vial of poison. Do please be careful, will you? That poison is lethal. One of you will also begin with a 10-foot length of rope, and another with an *immovable rod*. You'll find out who gets what once you're each on your platform.

"Your goal for this scenario is to make it up to and through the small opening in the ceiling of the room. The ceiling is 20 feet above your starting platforms.

"Oh, one final thing: You'll find the platforms are 20 feet above the floor of the room, and with good reason: There's a nasty gibbering mouther with snapping teeth lurking down there. As you might expect, anyone falling down there with it will be declared dead. Since the babbling of a gibbering mouther can drive a person insane, here are four sets of earplugs. For your own safety, please keep them in for the duration of the scenario. Since you won't be able to talk to each other with earplugs in, if you want the hint, get on your knees and hold your hands together in a penitent fashion. If I see all four of you in such a position, I'll provide the hint telepathically. Ready? Begin!"

The room is 20 feet wide, 20 feet long, and 40 feet high. The starting platforms are at the midway point between floor and ceiling, and each platform has a 3-foot-high metal railing preventing the PCs from falling off. A gibbering mouther sits in a blob on the floor, gnashing its many teeth. In the middle of the ceiling is a 5-foot-square opening. The room is lit by *continual flame* spells.

Each PC starts with a different-colored potion vial stoppered with a cork, upon which are written three letters as shown below. PC #1 also begins with an *immovable rod* (clearly labeled along its side), and PC #2 has a 10-foot length of rope.

PC	Color of Vial	Letters on Cork
#1	white	RAT

#2	pink	ALL
#3	silver	ION
#4	blue	ITE

Important Note: As the PCs' ears are sealed with earplugs, the players cannot talk to each other during this scenario. They'll have to use gestures, sign language, and anything else they can improvise.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the ceiling opening by the end of the 15-minute time period.

SOLUTION

The PCs each make known the three letters on their potion-vial corks. (Various methods for doing this are described below under "DM Notes.") Placing the

letters together in the proper order forms the word "alliteration." Using this clue, PC #3 quaffs the silver *potion of spider climb*, removes any footgear, and walks along the walls to each of the other PCs in turn and carries them to the opening in the ceiling.

The walls, floor, and ceiling are all smooth and unclimbable.

THE HINT

Since the PCs can't hear Mussfinch while they're wearing their earplugs, he holds up a sign reading "ALLITERATION."

DM NOTES

A PC cannot let others know what's written on her vial by simply showing the cork to them; the letters

ROUNDING OUT THE TEAM

If the PCs are short a teammate or two, they can meet up with any of the four PCs described here. These extra PCs are 1st-level characters who have avoided signing up together as a team because they fear they don't have the experience needed to perform well in the contest. Each one would be more than willing to join a more experienced party, though.

Feel free to use these extra PCs to fill out the party for the purpose of this adventure; once the adventure is over they can either stay on as NPCs or go their separate ways, as best fits your campaign. In any case, you shouldn't use the extra PCs to provide input during the scenarios. The contest is designed to challenge the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the players, so no help should be forthcoming from you via these extra characters.

♣ **Darvin, Male Half-elf Sor1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 1d4+3 (includes Toughness feat); hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); SA spells; SQ half-elf qualities; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; AL CG; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +5, Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Spellcraft +7, Spot +3. **Feats:** Toughness.

Darvin has a tendency to spout an endless stream of disgusting jokes, especially "dead kobold" jokes. Despite his quirky sense of humor, he's dependable and forthright.

♣ **Mirkysh, Male Gnome Brd1:** CR 1; Small Humanoid (3 ft. 5 in. tall); HD 1d6+2; hp 8; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 11); SA spells, bardic music; SQ gnome qualities, bardic knowledge; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; AL NG; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: (24) Alchemy +8*, Appraise +4, Diplomacy +4, Hide +9*, Listen +7*, Perform (buffoonery, comedy, melody, storytelling) +7. **Feats:** Dodge.

*Skill totals include all racial and size bonuses.

Khrys is a friendly gnome with a shaved head who enjoys performing in taverns and pubs. Khrys's vocal performances always improve after a few mugs of brew.

♣ **Bhessy, Femal Half-Orc Bbn1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 1d12+1; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); SA rage; SQ half-orc qualities; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CN; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +3, Jump +7. **Feats:** Power Attack.

Bhessy has a willingness to use fists as the cure-all solution to life's dilemmas. She's especially sensitive about her name, and she'll jump down the throat of the first person to make a cow joke in her hearing.

♣ **Waresh, Female Dwarf Rog1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (4 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 1d6+2; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 10); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ dwarf qualities; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -1; AL N; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

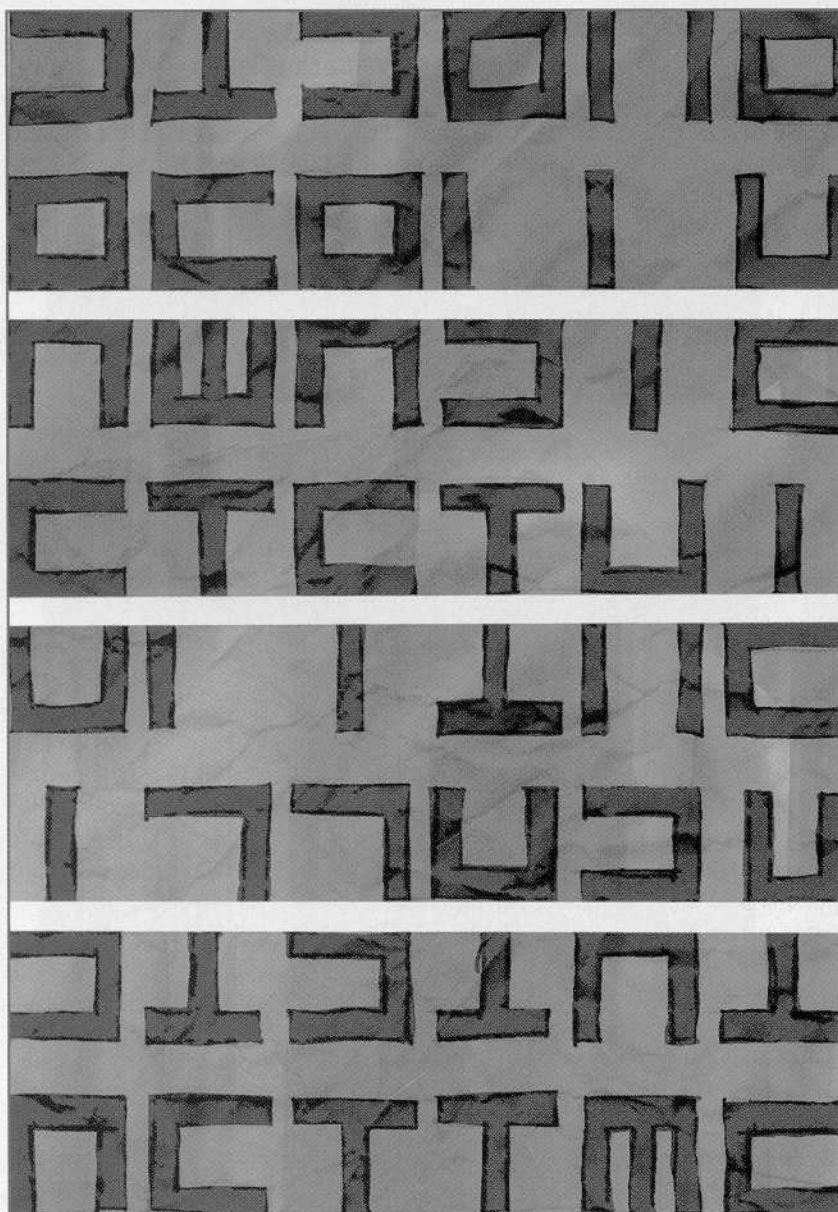
Skills: (32) Appraise +2*, Climb +4, Craft +2* (for stone or metal items only), Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +6, Pick Pocket +6, Search +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Endurance.

*Skill totals include all racial bonuses.

Waresh the dwarf has numerous facial piercings that make her look more intimidating. They include her nose, both ears (multiple times each), eyebrows, lower lip, and tongue. Watters scowls frequently but is really a big softy.

The statistics above describe the four extra PCs as they appear for the fourth annual Challenge of Champions. If you wish to make them permanent additions to the party, you'll have to outfit them with weapons, armor, spells, and the like, but these concerns are outside the scope of this adventure.

SCENARIO 4: PLAYER'S HANDOUT



are too small to make out from 20 feet away. One solution is to write the letters in the air with a finger.

Throwing a vial (or its cork) to another PC requires a successful ranged attack against AC 10 on the part of the thrower and a successful Dexterity check (DC 10) on the part of the catcher. If either roll fails, the thrown object falls to the floor below and is lost.

Lip-reading the letters spoken by another PC is possible with a successful Read Lips check (DC 15). If this works, have the speaker write down his or her three letters on a scrap of paper and pass it to the lip-reader so the other players don't also gain the information.)

Note that if you have fewer than four players running the four-person team, each player should only be provided the letters on one cork until such time as the PCs manage to communicate with each other. Finally,

be sure you don't ruin the silence effect yourself by writing the letters down or reading them aloud to each player. Small pieces of paper with each letter combination written on them can be used to circumvent this danger.

If none of the above methods works, the PCs can always travel to each other and compare vials. PC #1 can stand on the railing at the eastern edge of his or her platform with the *immovable rod* in hand and jump toward PC #2, activating it when he or she begins to fall. (Refer to the Jump skill on page 70 of the *Player's Handbook*; the PCs can only make standing jumps due to the size of the platforms.) PC #2 makes a lasso at one end of the rope and throws it to PC #1, who maneuvers it over the activated *immovable rod*. PC #2 ties the other end to the railing if desired. PC #1 deactivates the *rod* and is pulled up onto PC #2's platform, where the two can compare vials. PC #1 then jumps toward PC #4, activates the *immovable rod* in mid-air, and throws the end of the rope to PC #4, who then secures the rope and hauls PC #1 over in the manner described above. The same system is used to get PC #1 over to PC #3.

The alliteration clue refers to the first letter of the potion type and the color of the vial. Thus, *blur* goes with blue, *poison* with pink, *spider climb* with silver, and *water walk* with white. All of the potions' effects function as though cast at 5th level.

Any PC who drinks the vial of poison is declared dead for the rest of the scenario. Fortunately, the "poison" is not truly lethal (despite its terrible taste). In addition, anyone removing their earplugs is declared dead. While gibbering mouters normally cause *confusion* and not death, this was one of the constraints of the scenario.

The gibbering mouters is, in fact, a *polymorphed* guild wizard. It does not attack with the typical gibbering mouters attacks but makes a big show of snapping its teeth at the PCs. *Mussfinch* casts *feather fall* on any PC who falls toward the floor; that PC is declared dead for the rest of the scenario,

and any equipment carried is also out of reach of the other PCs.

A *dispel magic* removes the lingering effects of any potions before the PCs move on to the next scenario.

SCENARIO #4: EYE FOR AN EYE

"You've made it this far," says Scarrolupio, the guild wizard proctoring the fourth scenario. "Now you must do a bit of climbing." He leads you toward a large totem pole, carved into which are four iconic images of animals. The totem pole rises up from a sand pit, stands about 40 feet tall, and is placed near a wall of similar size.

"You see carved before you representations of various beasts of legend. Your goal is twofold: First, you must remove the top beast's left eye and replace it with this"—here he hands you a globe of red glass. "Second, you must each make your way to the top of the totem pole, where you can step off to the top of the wall and proceed to the next scenario. There's a set of stairs on the other side of the wall. Note, however, the extreme smoothness of this side of the wall; I can guarantee that none of you will be climbing up it. No, climbing the totem pole is the way to go, and just to make it interesting, we've taken the

liberty of greasing the pole, making it unclimbable without help of some sort. Fortunately, you'll find a 50-foot length of rope at the top, so climbing up should be significantly easier for the last three team members."

Scarrolupio pulls a set of four cards from inside his robe, as well as a small hand mirror. The cards each have runes along their longer sides. "You might need these," Scarrolupio says. "There is a secret message in this scenario that could make your task considerably easier, if you can figure out what it says."

SCENARIO 4: PLAYER'S HANDOUT

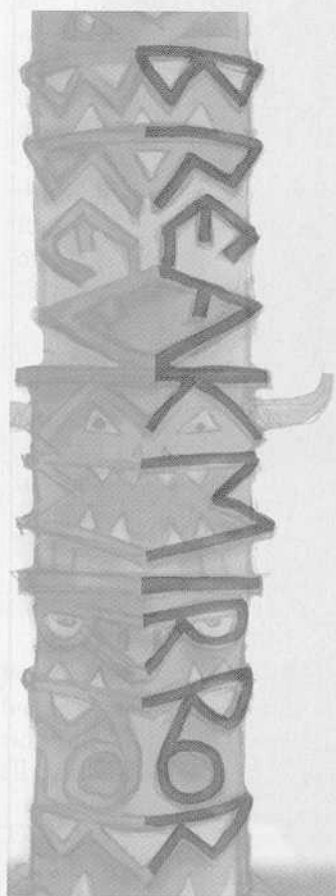


This entire area is lit with *continual flame* spells. The totem pole is 40 feet tall and 5 feet from a 40-foot-tall, unclimbable wall.

Important Note: You should present the players with the four "coded message cards" at the beginning of this scenario. You should also provide them with a small mirror, so they'll have everything their PCs have while attempting to decipher the hidden message.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it to the platform at the top of the totem pole within the 15-minute time limit, provided the eye has been removed and replaced with the red glass orb.



SCENARIO 4: SOLUTION

SOLUTION

The PCs ignore the cards and look to the totem pole itself for the real hidden message: The four animal totems depicted on the pole are comprised of reflected letters (when read sideways) that form the words "break mirror." The PCs break the mirror, which causes a 40-foot ladder to fall out of an extradimensional space inside. This enables the PCs to place the ladder against the totem pole, braced at the bottom so it doesn't slip away, and climb to the top to switch the eyes. The PCs can then place the ladder against the wall and climb over the top.

THE HINT

"Ignore the cards."

DM NOTES

The four coded message cards and the mirror are an attempt to lead astray those who have participated in previous challenges and try to use those experiences to their advantage. (In earlier Challenges of Champions, similar coded messages are reflected in a mirror to spell out clues, and other scenarios have hinged upon the secret message revealed when placing "coded message" cards together in their proper order.) This time around, some of the "hidden words" have been placed upside-down in relationship to the others, but regardless the cards are not necessary for the scenario's completion. In fact, the message formed by the cards is:

THIS IS (inverted Card D over inverted Card B)

REALLY (Card A over inverted Card C)

A WASTE (inverted Card A over Card B)

OF TIME (Card D over Card C)

PCs are free to try to climb the totem pole without the rope, but the grease on the totem pole makes it unclimbable.

Once at the top of the totem pole, removing and replacing the glass eye is a simple matter.

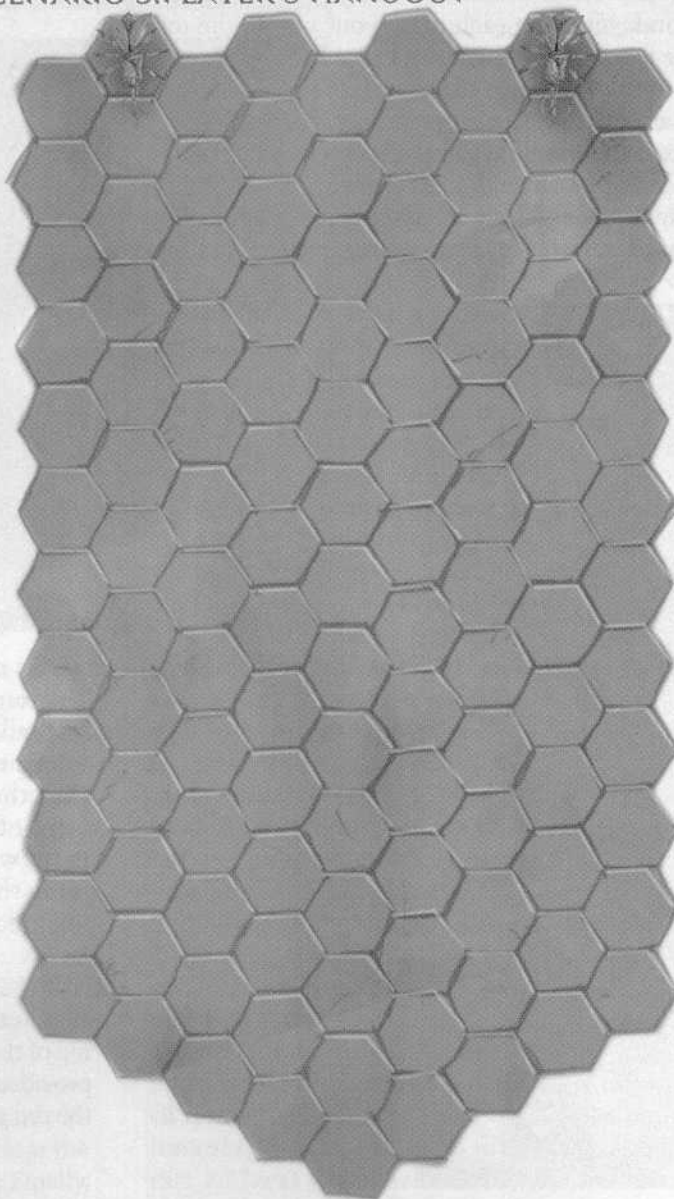
If PCs get close to making the leap of looking to the totem pole for clues (such as by looking at the pole reflected in the mirror, or simply

examining the pole closely), allow them a Spot check (DC 20). PCs can take 20 on this roll, but it costs them 2 minutes. If the check succeeds, feel free to give them a clue, such as, "You see something strange in the totem pole. It almost look like the creatures carved into the pole have another shape." If PCs specifically say they're looking for a written clue in the totem pole, allow them a Decipher Script check (DC 20) or a Search check (DC 25). PCs can take 20 on these checks, but doing so takes 2 minutes, which should be subtracted from their total time limit.

SCENARIO #5: ELF HIVE

"Tired of climbing up and down yet?" asks Justin, the gruff guild fighter proctoring the next scenario.

SCENARIO 3: PLAYER'S HANDOUT



"Well, you'll like this next scenario, then, 'cause it's all on the same level—no climbing involved. Here, gather 'round, and I'll tell you what's up."

Justin leads you around a corner to the starting area of the fifth scenario. Ahead of you is a narrow passageway with a floor constructed of hex-shaped stones. At the far end stand two statues of peculiar hybrid creatures with the eyes, wings, and bodies of bees, and the upper torsos and heads of elves. Each statue holds a drawn bow aimed in your direction. "Screwy looking things, huh?" remarks Justin. "Well, they're the guardians of this here elf hive, and they'll kill you if you step outta line."

"Here's the deal: This section of corridor is filled with magic traps, see? Them tiles are all pressure sensitive, so them guardian thingies can tell where everybody is. Only one person on a hex—that's the rule. Break the rule and you're dead. Also, some of them tiles have got bee-elf larva growin' under 'em, and the guardians don't like it when you step on a grub. So step on a grub hex, and you're dead."

"Fortunately, all them hexes detect as magical. If you step on a safe hex, a number'll appear in the middle of the hex. That shows how many grubs lurk under hexes next to the one you're standing on. Remember now, there's only one grub under each of them grub hexes, so if a '2' pops up on a hex, it means two of the hexes touching that one's got grubs under 'em. Got it? Right then. To make it easy on you, all of them first hexes is safe to stand on, I'll tell you that much."

"One final thing: Four of the hexes have magic keys on 'em. You can't see 'em 'cause they're invisible right now, but each key will appear when you stand on the hex it rests on. You each have to get yer own key, 'cause you each need to be holdin' a key to pass by the statues at the end of the hive. You got that? Then let's go!"

The entire area is lit by *continual flame* spells. The hex tiles are each 5 feet in diameter. The walls in the corridor are completely smooth, foiling all climbing attempts.

SCORING

10 points per PC who gets past the statues within the 15-minute time limit.

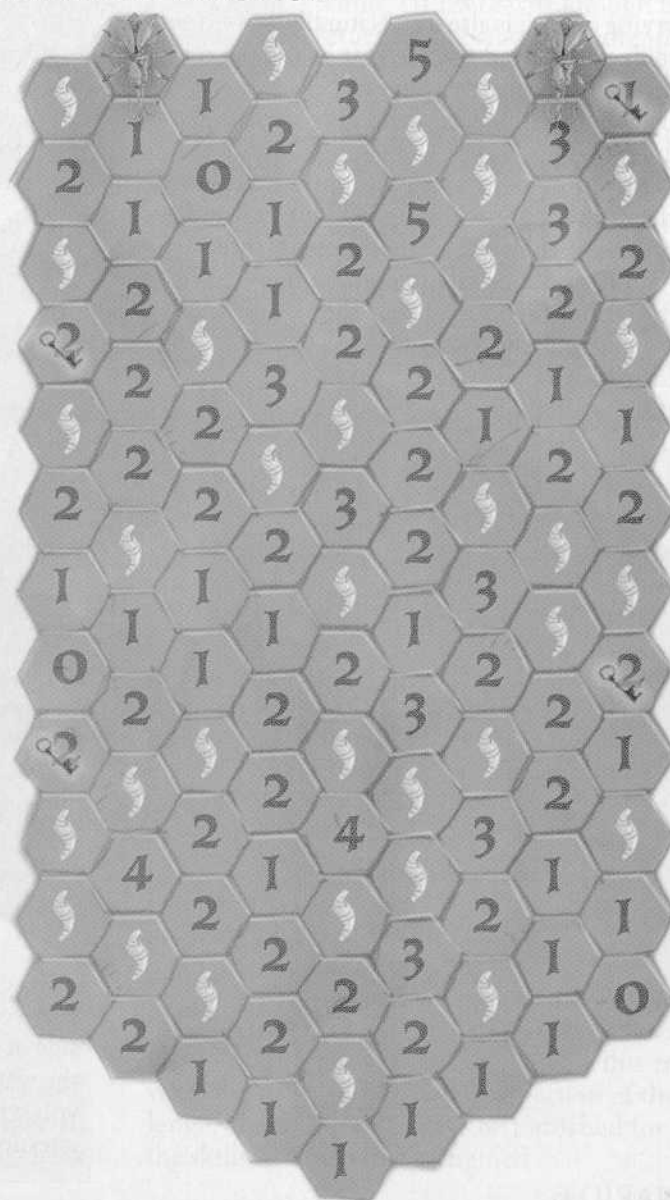
SOLUTION

The PCs each stand on a different hex at the front of the hive, note the numbers on the hexes they're standing on, and use logic to determine which hexes are safe to step on. They make their way across the hive in such a fashion, picking up the keys as they come across them, and each PC passes to safety with a key in hand.

THE HINT

"Once you've determined where all the grubs are, adjacent to a given hex, all the other hexes adjacent to that one are safe."

SCENARIO 3: SOLUTION



DM NOTES

There are two scenario maps: The first one is for the DM, showing the location of the grubs, the keys, and the numbers that appear on each hex. The second (blank) map is for the players, so they can fill in the numbers on the hexes as their PCs step on them. Have each player tell you the location of their PC on the hexes, and tell them what number appears when they step onto a safe hex (or describe how they're "vaporized" when they step onto a "grub" hex).

If a PC steps onto a "grub" hex, or multiple PCs stand on a single hex, the statues fire bolts of magic energy (resembling *magic missiles*) at the offenders, automatically striking them. PCs struck are instantly rendered invisible, magically silenced, and telekinetically levitated through the illusory ceiling of the room. To the other PCs, it appears as though their teammates were disintegrated. If the "vaporized" PC was carrying a key, it is also lost. Naturally, "vaporized" PCs are declared dead for the rest of the scenario. Stepping onto a "grub" hex does not clear it; anyone stepping onto the same hex later is also "vaporized" by the statues.

A PC can jump over a hex and land on the one beyond, but this isn't usually a good idea unless they already know that the target hex is safe. (Although it would be safe to do so at the very end of the hive to get past the statues as long as the PC holds one of the four keys.) Use the Jump rules on page 70 of the *Player's Handbook*.

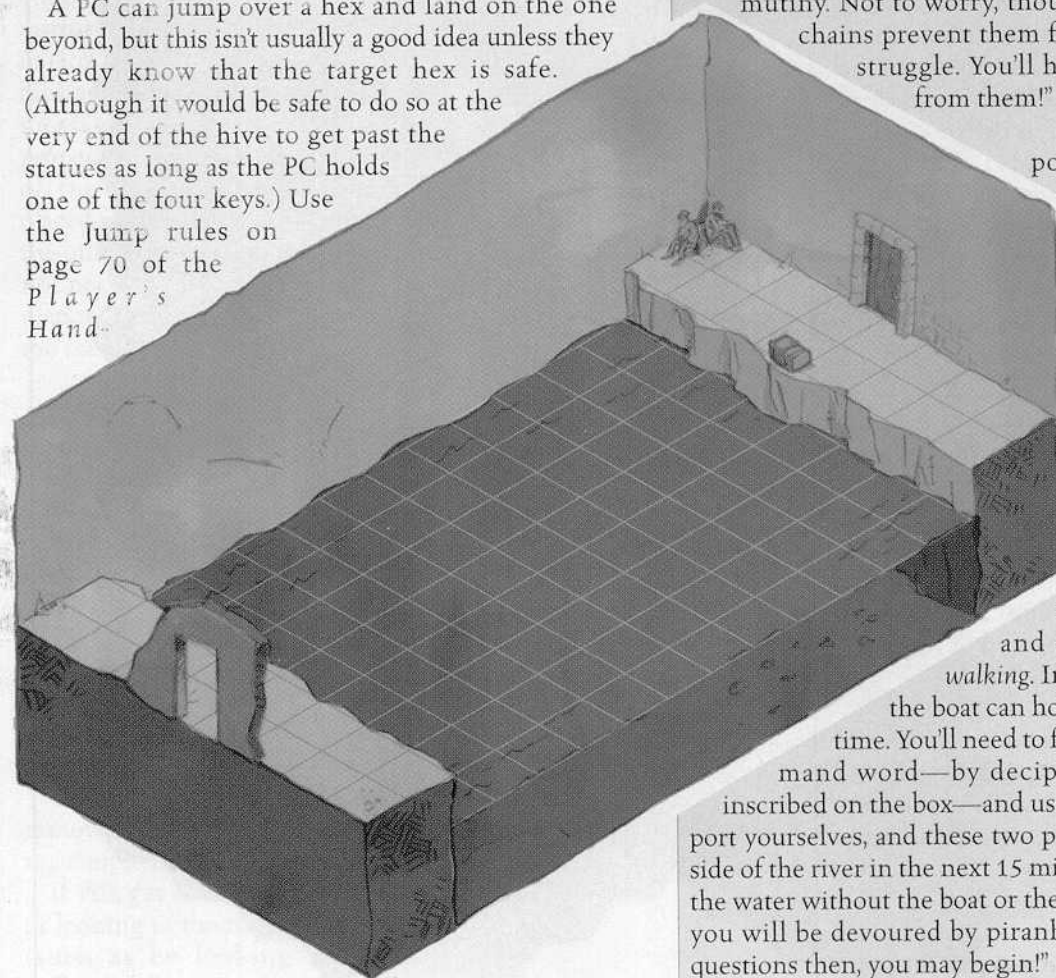
book to determine the success of a jump.

Once a key has been used to get past the two statues, it is rendered nonmagical. Thus, it cannot be passed back to another PC to allow him or her safe passage. Each of the PCs must use a different key.

SCENARIO #6: SEASICK SAILORS

You are met by Father Quespin, another guild cleric. "Good day, Team Ten," he says, leading you through a door and into the area where the next scenario is held. This one involves water: A 100-foot-long pool stretches from wall to wall. "The water," says Father Quespin, "represents a piranha-filled river. The goal this time is simple," he says. He indicates a pair of young men in sailors' garb, both of whom look rather ill. They are shackled together at the wrist by a 6-foot chain. "You must transport these two seasick sailors, and yourselves, to the far side of the river. I'm afraid the sailors are not in any condition to assist you, so you'll have to do all of the work. Nor would they help you in any case, for they're being sent to trial for attempted mutiny. Not to worry, though: Those magic chains prevent them from putting up a struggle. You'll have no problems from them!"

Father Quespin points out your starting equipment: a small wooden box, upon which are inscribed several words and an outer ring of miscellaneous letters. "This box is a *folding boat*," he explains. "It currently holds four rings: Three nonmagical rings and one *ring of water walking*. In its rowboat form, the boat can hold four people at a time. You'll need to figure out the command word—by deciphering the clues inscribed on the box—and use the boat to transport yourselves, and these two prisoners, to the far side of the river in the next 15 minutes. If you enter the water without the boat or the magic of the ring, you will be devoured by piranha. If there are no questions then, you may begin!"



SCENARIO 6

SCENARIO 6: PLAYER'S HANDOUT



This scenario takes place in a large, open-air arena and thus has natural lighting. The pool of water is a uniform 10 feet deep.

SCORING

10 points per PC on the far side of the river at the end of the 15-minute time limit, but only if the two seasick sailors have been transported there as well.

SOLUTION

The PCs examine the inscription carved into the box, which reads "Come, human, die by sword or spear." Examining the nineteen letters in the outer ring circling the inscription, the PCs note that all of the letters of the alphabet are represented except for B, E, H, I, S, U, and Y. Removing those letters from the phrase in the inscription above reveals "COMMAND WORD ORPAR." When the word "orpar" is spoken aloud, the box unfolds to form a rowboat (10 feet long, 4 feet wide, 2 feet deep) with a single pair of oars. Two PCs ferry the sailors to the other side of the river, then one returns to fetch the other two PCs.

THE HINT

"If the letter's not in the ring, it's not in the middle."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Rowing the boat across the river requires a successful Strength check (DC 10). Two PCs can each take an oar, with one PC assisting the other's Strength check

(use the Aid Another rule on page 135 of the *Player's Handbook*). PCs can also take 10 on this check, if they desire. The boat has a speed of 10 feet per round. Crossing the river with the ring is probably faster, since most PCs have higher speeds than the boat. An average human (speed 30 feet) can run across the river in a single round.

DM NOTES

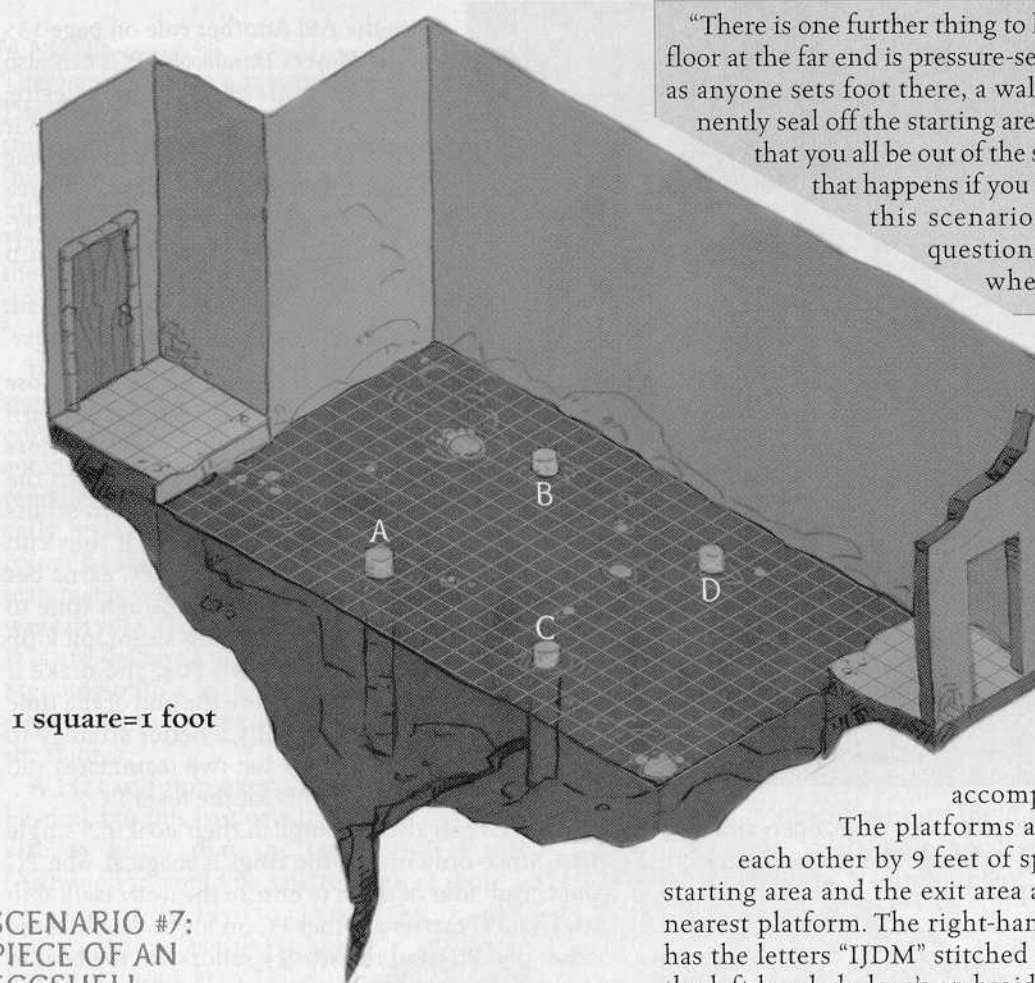
At the end of the time limit, only those PCs on the far side of the river earn points, and then only if both sailors have been shuttled across. It's in the team's best interest to get both sailors across in the first trip, so if they run out of time, at least one PC earns her points. (If there isn't enough time to return to the starting shore, pick up the remaining two PCs, and make it across again before the end of the time limit, it's actually a better strategy to "abandon" the last two teammates and earn 20 points for the team.)

The PCs can also accomplish their goal in a single trip. Since only one of the rings is magical, one PC puts on all four of them to ensure the *water walk* ability. That PC carries another PC on his back, while the other two PCs and the seasick sailors use the boat to cross the river.

Because of the "deadly piranhas" inhabiting the "river," any PC who enters the water outside the boat is pronounced "dead," although no piranhas are actually present. The boat can only hold the weight of four people; if five or more people pile into it, the boat sinks and everyone in it is declared "dead." Similarly, a *water walking* PC can carry only one person on his back without sinking into the water and being devoured by the piranhas. This prevents a particularly strong contestant from grabbing the two prisoners and crossing the river with the *ring of water walking* if the party can't figure out the command word to the *folding boat*.

Allow PCs who ask about the clue engraved on the *folding boat* to make a Decipher Script check (DC 18) to notice the missing letters (don't tell them which letters are missing, though). Finally, anyone who succeeds at a Use Magic Device check (DC 25) can open the *boat* without a command word (consult the "Activate Blindly" option of Use Magic Device on page 76 of the *Player's Handbook*). While this circumvents the truly time-consuming portion of the challenge, clever PCs shouldn't be punished for using the skills in which they're trained.

SCENARIO 7



"There is one further thing to keep in mind. The floor at the far end is pressure-sensitive, so as soon as anyone sets foot there, a wall drops to permanently seal off the starting area. I would suggest that you all be out of the starting area when that happens if you wish to succeed at this scenario. If there are no questions, you may begin when you're ready!"

This area is lit by multiple continual flame spells. The lava pool is 6 feet deep, with four stone platforms projecting 1 foot above the lava. For ease of identification, the projections are labeled A, B, C, and D (see the accompanying diagram).

The platforms are separated from each other by 9 feet of space, and both the starting area and the exit area are 9 feet from the nearest platform. The right-handed glove of storing has the letters "IJDM" stitched on the back, while the left-handed glove's embroidery reads "THNB."

SCENARIO #7: PIECE OF AN EGGSHELL

A guild wizard named Mercurio is waiting for you at the end of the sixth scenario. "You have made it this far," he says. "Now, you must cross a pool of lava to deliver a valuable spell component to a desperate wizard. The spell component is this small piece of eggshell, taken from the egg of a red dragon immediately after it hatched." Mercurio hands you the eggshell fragment about the size of a human hand.

"Note the layout of the pool of lava," says Mercurio. "There are four small stone platforms rising up out of the pool, each 1 foot in diameter. To assist you in your crossing, here is your starting equipment: Two 10-foot-long wooden boards and two gloves of storage. One glove holds a ring of spell storing loaded with an *endure elements* (fire) spell, and the other holds a homunculus trained to attack everyone but its master. I won't tell you which is which, but note the stitching on the back of each glove. Also, be careful with the boards! They can only support the weight of one of you at a time. And naturally, anyone falling into the lava will be declared dead immediately.

SCORING

10 points per PC who crosses to the exit area at the end of the 15-minute time limit.

SOLUTION

PC #1 places one of the boards from the starting area to D, walks to D with the other board, places it from D to C, and walks to C. PC #2 walks to D, removes the board connecting to C and repositions it to reach B, then walks to B. PC #3 walks to D, picks up the board from the starting area and passes it to PC #2. PC #2 places the board from B to A and walks to A. PC #3 walks to B, removes the board connecting to A, repositions it to connect D and the starting area, and returns to B. PC #4 walks to D, removes the board connecting to the starting area and passes it to PC #3. PC #3 reconnects the board from B to A, then passes the board connecting B and D to PC #2. PC #2 uses the board to connect A and the exit area, and walks to the exit. PC #3 walks to A, removes the board connecting to the exit, uses it to connect A to C, then returns to B. PC #1 walks to A, removes the board connecting A to C, uses it to connect A and the exit

area, and exits. PC #3 walks to A, removes the board connecting A and the exit area, walks to B, and places the board to connect B and D. PC #3 walks to A. PC #4 walks to B, removes the board connecting B and D, and passes it to PC #3. PC #3 places the board to connect A and the exit area, and PC #3 exits, followed by PC #4.

THE HINT

"The gloves are unnecessary for the task at hand."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Rather than worrying about how long it takes to place a board into position, have the players simulate the time it takes by stating each separate action. For example: "I pick up board 1 and place it between the starting point and stone D" would be 1 round. "I pick up board 2 and walk to stone D" would be another. Picking up a board, setting down a board, and walking across a board are all move-equivalent actions. A PC can take two move-equivalent actions in a round.

DM NOTES

The two *gloves of storing* are red herrings; neither is needed to complete the scenario. (In fact, the letters on the gloves stand for "It Just Doesn't Matter" and "This Has No Bearing.")

The homunculus is stored in the right glove, and the *ring of spell storing* is in the left. The *endure elements (fire)* spell has no real effect on the scenario, for anyone falling into the "lava" submerges below the surface and is declared "dead" by drowning, if not by burning. Naturally, the "pool of lava" is just an illusion; any PC falling through the illusory lava lands on a cushion of soft sand, taking no damage.

PCs with good Jump checks can leap from pillar to pillar. The first jump can be taken as a running long jump, while the others would be standing long jumps. Landing on a pillar after such a jump should require a Balance check (DC 20) to avoid falling in the lava.

Creature: If the PCs release the homunculus, it attacks, biting each PC in turn in an effort to put

them to sleep with its venom. Note that PCs who succumb to the sleep venom might end up snoozing through the rest of the scenario!

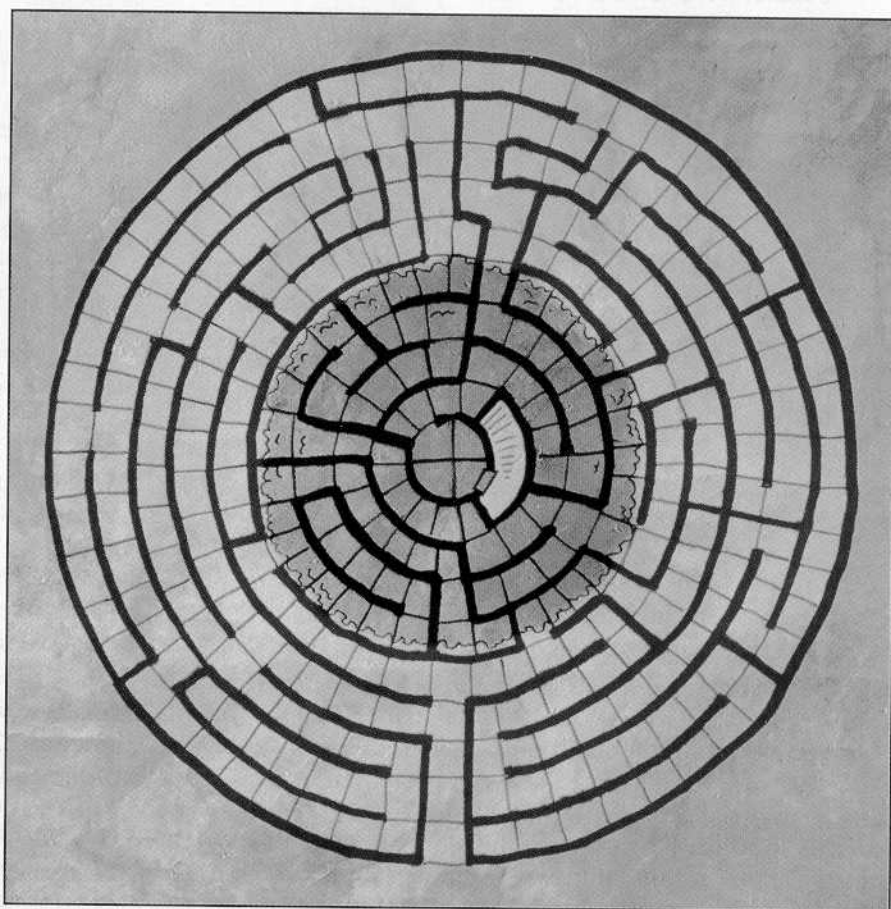
Unlike most scenarios, which feature *polymorphed* guild wizards as part of the scenario, this is a real homunculus. It belongs to Mercurio, and he can order it to desist at any time. The homunculus breaks off from combat and flies away if it takes any damage.

➤ **Homunculus:** hp 11; *Monster Manual* 120.

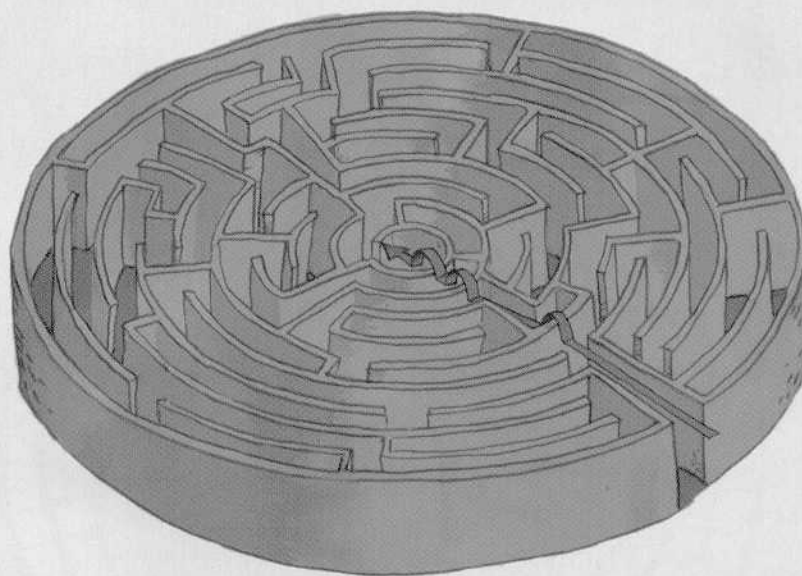
If the PCs attack and kill the homunculus, Mercurio takes 2d10 points of damage (and probably curses to himself at the loss of a week's work), but he's of high enough level that this is merely an inconvenience. Once the PCs move on to the next scenario and before the next competing team starts scenario #7, Mercurio quaffs a curative potion or two and "loads" another homunculus in the *glove of storing*.

SCENARIO #8: ASPHYXIATE

You are greeted by Parnival, the guild cleric procuring the next scenario. He offers each of you a drink of water, filling four glass mugs from a rain barrel. "This next scenario challenges your ability



SCENARIO 8: SOLUTION



to navigate a maze," he says. "The good news is that you'll get to see the layout ahead of time." He removes a small cloth from the wall and drops it on the floor to reveal a painted diagram of a circular maze. "The bad news is that you can't take it with you, so you'll have to memorize the route you wish to take ahead of time. To further complicate matters, at the center of the maze is an unstoppered *eversmoking bottle*, which has caused smoke to cover the central area of the maze, as shaded on the map. Here is the stopper. You need only place it back on the bottle, say the command word 'begone,' and exit through the door at the center of the maze. There is no illumination within the maze, so here are two *everburning torches*. You have 15 minutes to complete this scenario. Begin!"

While there is a 20-foot-high ceiling in this area, the walls of the maze are only 10 feet high, allowing the smoke from the *eversmoking bottle* to spill out in the shaded area of the map. Allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 12) to notice the height of the walls in proportion to the ceiling if they don't ask about it (it's something the characters would notice, but not something many players might think to ask about).

Important Note: Once the PCs enter the maze, take the scenario map away from the players.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the door in the center of the maze by the end of the time limit.

SOLUTION

The PCs rip the cloth into fourths, creating four handkerchief-sized scraps. They dip their cloths into

the water, wring it out, and study the maze diagram.

After entering the maze, the PCs go straight until they hit the first wall. Then, rather than try to navigate the maze by memory (and using the aphorism "the shortest path between two points is a straight line"), they climb over the walls in their way.

The PCs can toss one of their *everburning torches* over the first wall (to provide illumination on the other side), then boost one another up and over that wall before continuing in a straight line until the next

wall. They repeat the procedure, and then again with the wall immediately beyond that one, entering the central chamber. Once there, they locate the *eversmoking bottle* and seal it with the stopper.

THE HINT

"You'll breathe easier through a wet filter."

TIME CONSTRAINTS

When the PCs navigate the maze, you should give the players a description of what their PCs see and a list of their options. Refrain from providing cardinal directions like "north" or "south," referring only to "right," "left," and "straight." This not only puts the onus of figuring out where the PCs are on the players, but the time it takes for you to verbalize their options helps simulate the length of time it takes for the PCs to actually navigate the maze. A short example follows (the example assumes the PCs have tried to memorize their way through the maze instead of climbing over the walls):

DM: "You proceed straight ahead for several paces, then can either turn left or continue going straight."

Player: "We turn left."

DM: "You turn left and follow a corridor that curves slightly to the right. After a time, you can turn left or continue going straight."

Player (forgetting the correct route): "We go straight."

DM: "You continue on, and the corridor turns right, then right again. After continuing on a short distance, it comes to a dead end."

While by no means a perfect system, the central portion of the maze has been divided up into sections (you really can't call them "squares") by red

lines. Assume each red section is the equivalent of a 5-foot square for movement purposes. This makes it easier for you to judge when the PCs must make their smoke inhalation saving throws (see "DM Notes" below).

If the PCs begin climbing the walls, keep track of the number of checks they make to monitor the time. It is recommended that once the PCs finish studying the map and head into the maze, you begin initiative, with all the PCs going at the same time. This will enable you to accurately keep track of elapsed time as the PCs make their way through the scenario.

DM NOTES

Normally, a PC must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) each round she breathes heavy smoke; the DC increases by +1 each additional round. (See the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, page 89, under "Smoke.") If the PCs are holding wet cloths over their faces, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to their saves. A PC who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage. Once a PC has taken more subdual damage than she has hit points, she falls unconscious. Note that a PC can hold her breath (for a number of rounds equal to her Constitution score, and for more rounds after that time has expired if she makes successful Fortitude saves) when entering the smoke to delay having to make saves to prevent smoke inhalation (see "The Drowning Rule" on page 85 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*). But once a character fails a Fortitude save, instead of beginning to drown, she must start making saving throws to prevent smoke inhalation.

Climbing over a wall requires a Climb skill check (DC 15). Note that two PCs can use the Aid Another action to help a climber. If one character has already climbed to the top of the wall (which is 1 foot wide—point this out when the first PC reaches the top of the wall) and is leaning down to help someone below, as many as three PCs can use the Aid Another action. Note that a PC hanging over the edge of a 10-foot wall and dropping to the ground takes no damage. The same is true for anyone who makes a successful Jump or Tumble check (DC 15) to reduce the damage, but anyone foolish enough to leap from the top of a 10-foot-high wall takes the standard 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Note that nimble PCs can attempt Jump and Balance checks to leap from wall top to wall top. This doesn't prevent smoke inhalation, but it can provide PCs with darkvision a good "lay of the land" outside the smoke-filled portion of the maze. Calculate Jump checks based on distance (see the Jump skill description in the *Player's Handbook*), and require leaping PCs to make a Balance check

(DC 20) to avoid falling off the wall after making a landing. PCs who fall take the normal 1d6 points of subdual damage. Jumping into the smoke is possible, though difficult, for PCs who think they've memorized the layout of the maze. If a PC attempts such a feat, impose a -10 circumstance penalty to the Jump and Balance checks to represent the difficulty in gauging distance correctly when effectively blind.

Once inside the central area, a PC can find the *eversmoking bottle* with a successful Search check (DC 12). Once the bottle is stoppered, the smoke dissipates within 10 rounds. The door out of the maze is magically locked, but it opens to the command word "begone" (said when the *eversmoking bottle* is stoppered). On the other side of the door is a set of stairs leading up to the next scenario.

Even if two PCs succumb to smoke inhalation, they still earn their 10 points for the scenario if the other two PCs can drag them out of the door after stoppering the *eversmoking bottle*. This encourages teamwork among the group members.

If the PCs wind up lost in the maze or succumb to the smoke, they are rescued by guild clerics and escorted to the door at the center of the maze. Any subdual damage is healed by the clerics so the PCs can immediately proceed to the next scenario.

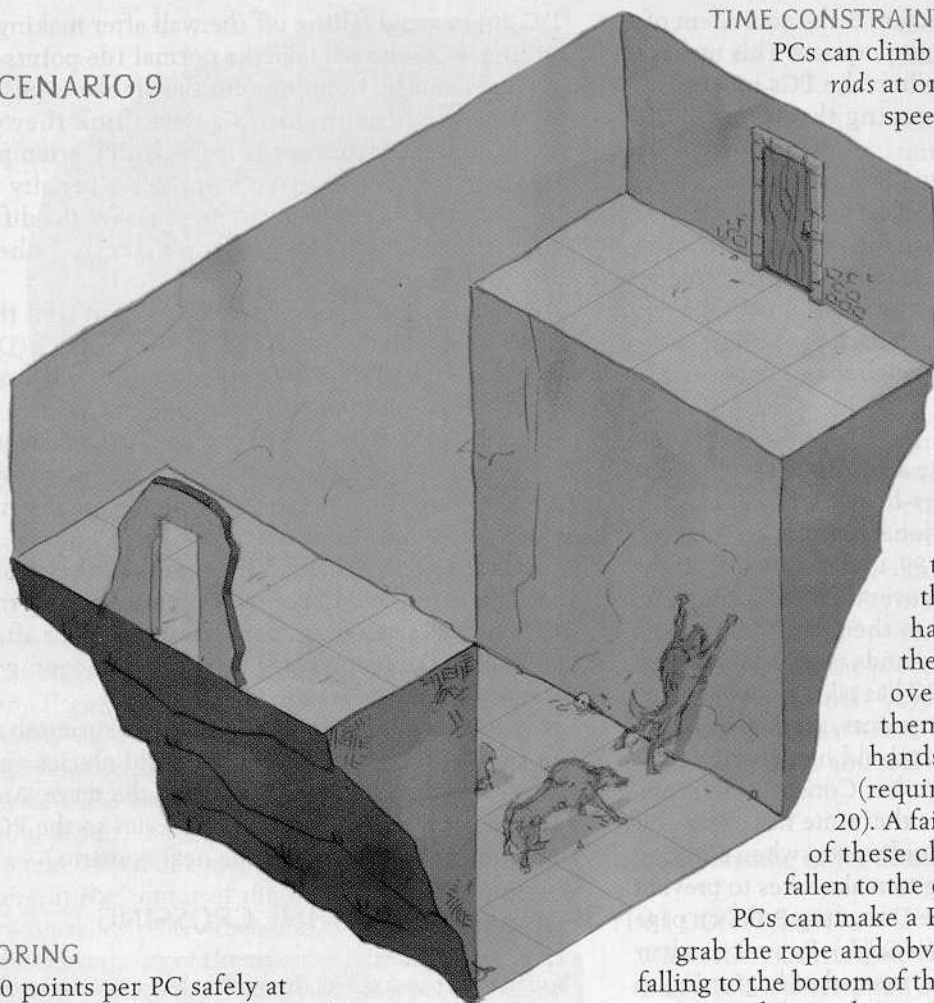
SCENARIO #9: CANINE CROSSING

You are met by Lydric, the guild cleric in charge of the ninth scenario. He leads you to one side of a large pit 20 feet deep, 20 feet wide, and 20 feet long. There are three vicious dire wolves in the bottom of the pit, gnawing on some humanoid bones.

"Your task this time is simple," says Lydric. "You need only cross the pit without being savaged by the dire wolves. Anyone attacked by them will immediately be declared dead. To aid you in accomplishing your goal, here is some starting equipment: One 12-foot length of rope, one *immovable rod*, and a *ring of spell storing* holding an *invisibility to animals* spell. Please note that there are two other items of possible usefulness: another *immovable rod* and another 12-foot stretch of rope. Unfortunately, you'll find the second *rod* down with the wolves, and the second rope on the far side of the pit. Please note the smoothness of the walls; climbing them is simply not possible. Good luck to you!"

The starting area is only as wide as the pit. The entire area is lit by *continual flame* spells. The ceiling is 10 feet above the floor of the starting area and 30 feet above the floor of the pit.

SCENARIO 9



TIME CONSTRAINT

PCs can climb up a wall using *immovable rods* at one-quarter their normal speed. They cross the rope at half their normal speed.

Again, it is helpful to break into initiative once the actual actions start, keeping track of elapsed time accordingly.

DM NOTES

Crossing the rope can be done several ways. PCs can opt to make a Strength check (DC 10) to pull themselves along the rope (either hand-over-hand while they hang from the rope, or by hooking a leg over the rope and pulling themselves along with their hands), or tightrope across it (requiring a Balance check, DC 20). A failure by 5 or more on any

of these checks means the PC has fallen to the dire wolves below. Falling

PCs can make a Balance check (DC 18) to grab the rope and obviate such a disaster. A PC falling to the bottom of the pit has a *feather fall* spell cast upon him and is immediately declared "dead" (savaged by the wolves). Fortunately, the dire wolves are *polymorphed* guild wizards and won't actually harm the fallen contestants. A PC under the effects of the *invisibility to animals* spell is not automatically detected but takes 1d6 points of subdual damage and 1d6 points of regular damage from the fall; guild wizards keep track of this character and save their *feather fall* spells for those PCs not protected.

If more than one PC tries crossing the rope at the same time, a PC holding the end of the rope must succeed at a Strength check (DC 20 if there are two people on the rope, DC 25 if there are three) or have the rope slip from her grasp. Any PCs on the rope fall to the wolves below and are declared dead (again, excluding the PC protected by the *invisibility to animals* spell).

PCs might also attempt to Jump the pit partway, using the first *rod* to halt their fall (a Strength check against DC 5 is required to avoid losing one's grip on the *rod*). They can then attach the first length of rope to the *rod*, and swing back and forth until they reach the other side (provided they jumped far enough). In this case, assume it takes 2 minutes for the last three

SCORING

10 points per PC safely at the other side of the pit at the end of the 15-minute time limit.

SOLUTION

The PC with the *ring of spell storing* casts *invisibility to animals* upon herself or another PC (designated PC #1, regardless). PC #1 takes the *immovable rod* and is lowered into the pit with the rope. The rope is dropped into the pit with her. She retrieves the second *immovable rod* and uses it and the first *immovable rod* to climb up the wall on the far side of the pit. She then retrieves the other 12-foot length of rope, ties both ropes together, and ties one end of it to the middle of an *immovable rod*. She then throws that end of the rope back to the other PCs, holding on to the other end of the rope as she does so. The PCs in the starting area activate the *immovable rod* at arm's length over the pit, then take turns climbing across the rope while PC #1 anchors the other end with the second *immovable rod*.

THE HINT

"You can climb the wall with the rods."

SCENARIO 10

PCs to swing across one at a time. If the PCs don't tie themselves to the rope, they need to make a Strength check (DC 5) to hold on while swinging.

SCENARIO #10: DEATH POTENTIAL

At last, the final scenario is upon you! "I'm so glad you've made it this far," says Marilyssa, the guild cleric proctoring the last scenario. She looks at your score sheet, then hands it to you.

At this time, give the players the score sheet with their current scores recorded. Once each player has seen the team's scores, Marilyssa begins describing the last scenario:

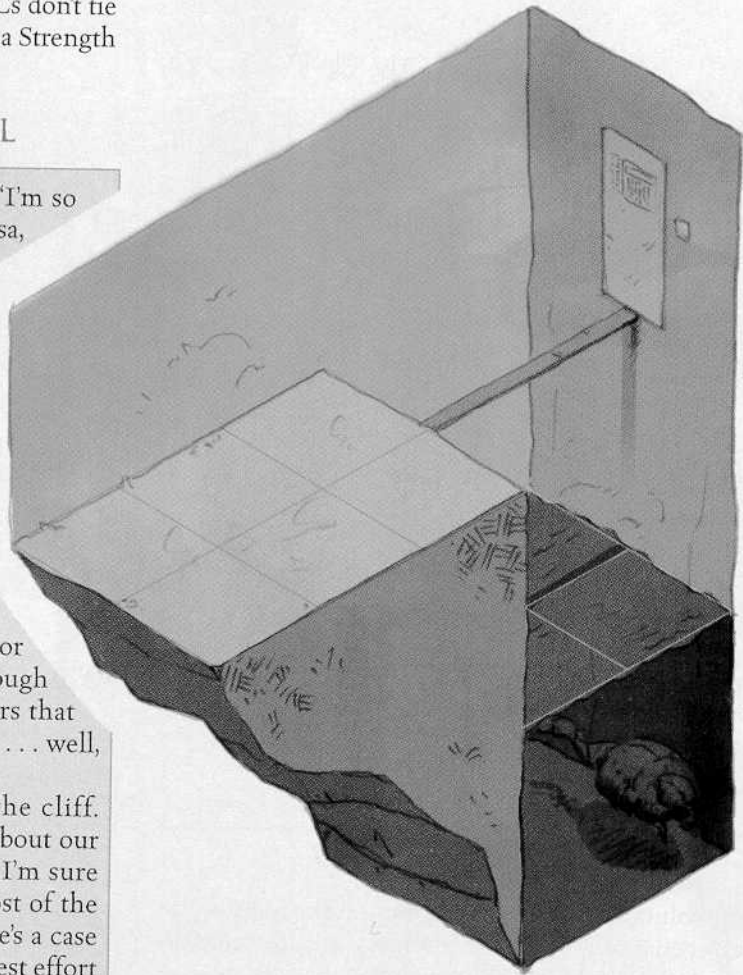
"You need only cross the narrow bridge spanning the cliff you see before you, puzzle out the magic lock that seals the door in the cliff face opposite us, and exit through it. If you make it, you'll find a set of stairs that leads to the cheering crowd above. If not . . . well, come with me."

Marilyssa leads you to the edge of the cliff. "Believe it or not, we've had complaints about our scenarios not being dangerous enough. I'm sure you've noticed the artificial nature of most of the threats you've faced so far. I suppose there's a case to be made about not putting forth your best effort if you know that no harm will befall you if you fail, but frankly, I'd rather err on the side of caution.

"Nonetheless, it was decided that this last scenario should present some real danger. Therefore, in the waters below swims a hybrid creature: part bloodsucking tick, part tadpole. We call him a tickpole. I'd caution you to keep your footing. Anyone falling into the water will be attacked and probably devoured. I'm prohibited from intervening; if you fall in, you're on your own, although we will attempt to restore the lives of those who signed up for our *raise dead* or *resurrection* offers." She looks down sadly. "There's already been one . . . incident. You don't have to continue with this; just say the word and we'll quit right here."

If the PCs opt not to continue, they earn no points for this scenario. Tally the totals earned for the first nine scenarios and continue with "Concluding the Adventure" below. If they choose to go through Scenario #10, read or paraphrase the following:

"Well then," says Marilyssa, "The mechanics of the lock ahead are simple: There are ten rods, labeled 1



through 10, that must be inserted into the appropriate holes for the door to open. It's up to you to figure out which rods go into which holes, but there isn't much room on the bridge, so you might want to examine the door one at a time. Once the rods are in place, put your hand on the plate on the right of the door. If you've placed the rods correctly, the door will open. If you haven't . . . well, I hope you're good swimmers. If you're ready, you may begin."

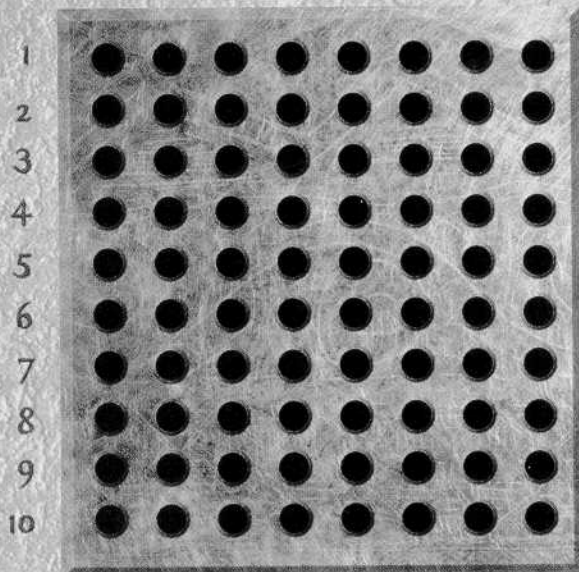
The "bridge" crossing the water is 10 feet long but only 2 feet wide. The water is 10 feet below the level of the door and at least 10 feet deep. The tickpole swims back and forth across the length of the pool like a hungry tiger pacing in a cage. Each metal rod is 4 inches long and half an inch thick.

SCORING

10 points per PC who makes it through the door within the time limit.

SCENARIO 10: PLAYER'S HANDOUT

Beware of TICKPOLE



ELF HIVE = L-5
SEASICK SAILORS = C-6
PIECE OF AN EGGSHELL = P-7
ASPHYXIAE = C-8
CANINE CROSSING = K-9
DEATH POTENTIAL = O-10

The numbers correspond with the numbers on the rods, while the letters refer to the letters in the word "TICKPOLE" on the warning sign. The ten rods must be placed as shown in the DM's diagram.

THE HINT

"Your score sheet holds the answer to the puzzle."

DM NOTES

Once a PC places all ten rods into holes, he can attempt to activate the opening mechanism on the door by placing a hand on the plate. If the rods are in the correct sequence, the door swings inward and the PCs can exit. If any rod is

SOLUTION

The solution is derived by looking at the titles of the ten scenarios on the PCs' score sheet. Each scenario title has the solution phonetically imbedded in it, as follows:

CH^{ESS}, ANYONE? = E-1

HELL TO PAY = L-2

ARE THOSE TEETH REAL? = T-3

EYE FOR AN EYE = I-4

in the wrong hole, the bridge instantly vanishes. (Although illusion magic makes it look like a plank of wood, it's really a narrow energy field similar to a *wall of force*.) Any PCs standing on the bridge at that time fall into the water and are attacked by the tickpole. While the tickpole is in fact a *polymorphed* guild wizard, rather than just simply having Marilyssa declare the PC dead for the rest of the scenario, hidden guild illusionists

TABLE 1: TEAM SCORES BY SCENARIO

TEAM NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Griffons	30	40	30	30	40	40	40	40	40	20	350
Amazons*	40	40	40	20	40	40	40	0	40	40	340
Dangerseekers	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	0	30	20	330
Four Horsemen*	40	20	40	40	30	0	40	40	40	20	310
Clan of the Claw*	40	20	20	30	40	20	20	40	40	30	300
Shieldbreakers*	40	40	20	40	40	0	40	40	30	0	290
Orcbusters	40	20	40	40	40	0	40	10	40	5	275
The Fearless Four*	30	30	30	30	40	10	30	0	40	20	260
Team Pegasus*	40	20	30	40	40	0	40	0	40	0	250
Alleycats*	40	20	30	40	40	10	20	0	40	0	240
Burly Musclemen*	0	20	30	30	40	0	40	0	40	5	205
Heartbreakers	40	0	20	30	40	0	20	0	10	0	160
Devil Dogs	0	40	30	20	0	0	10	40	0	0	140
Bisquayne's Final Army*	40	0	10	10	30	0	0	30	0	0	120

*These teams were part of the betting pool.

SCORE SHEET

TEAM NAME: _____

	SCENARIO	PC #1	PC #2	PC #3	PC #4	TOTAL
#1	CHESS, ANYONE?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#2	HELL TO PAY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#3	ARE THOSE TEETH REAL?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#4	EYE FOR AN EYE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#5	ELF HIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#6	SEASICK SAILORS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#7	PIECE OF AN EGGSHELL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#8	ASPHYXIATE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#9	CANINE CROSSING	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
#10	DEATH POTENTIAL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	TOTAL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

create a convincing display of the fallen PCs being ripped to pieces by the guard-beast. (Meanwhile, the real PCs are escorted out of the pool via a hidden underwater exit point.) Marilyssa, for her part, looks anguished at the PCs' apparent demise. One round after blinking out of existence, the bridge reforms and is ready for the next attempt.

Make sure you point out that there is no ledge for the PCs to stand on, so whoever is working on the lock is also standing on the bridge. The door is set right into a tall cliff face 80 feet high.

Because of the nature of the phonetics involved, the following are also accepted locations for the rods: E-3 instead of T-3; E-6 instead of C-6; E-7 instead of P-7; and E-8 instead of C-8.

Allow PCs to make a Decipher Script check (DC 20) to realize that the names of the events sound funny—almost as if there are more words within the titles. If one of the PCs says the name of an event aloud in any context, allow the other characters a Listen check (DC 20) to receive the same clue.

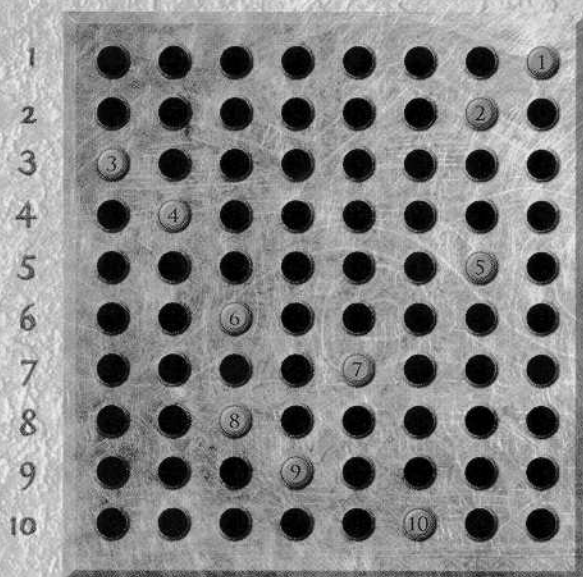
CONCLUSION

Once the PCs have finished all ten scenarios, their scores are tallied. To compare their results with those of the other teams, consult Table 1.

The characters are escorted to a tent similar to the one where they first gathered. There, they can meet the members of the other teams, who press the PCs for information on how they did. Common questions include, "Did anyone get 'killed' during the scenarios, and if so, how many times?" (The current record is held by Bisquayne, who died no less than four times during the scenarios—twice killed by his own disgusted party members.) The questions continue as everyone tries to gauge their success against that of the PCs. As more teams finish every 15 minutes, the questions and conversation begin again.

A guild representative reminds the PCs that they are free to roam the area until all the contestants have finished the contest. Vendors of all types sell their wares from their carts, and there are guild exhibits set up in tents all along the way. They are warned not to discuss the specifics of the scenarios with anyone other than the competitors who have likewise finished.

Beware of TICKPOLE



At long last, all the teams make it through the scenarios, and everyone is ushered outside to a waiting audience, eager to hear the results of the contest. The contestants are arranged in a semicircle around a wooden platform. Up to the platform steps Farthingale, the rotund guildmaster of the Adventurers Guild. He says a few opening remarks praising the prowess of this year's competitors, and then begins the awards ceremony. The third place team is called up first, followed by the second place team. The members of the second and third place teams each receive brass medals that note their place in the contest over an engraving of the Adventurers Guild crest. The team's name and the date is also etched into each medallion. Each medal is worth about 1 gp.

Finally, the overall winning team is announced. As Farthingale calls the team up to the stand, applause rips through the audience as they cheer for the winners. The members of the winning team each receive a brass tickpole trophy engraved with their names, their team name, year, and "Challenge of Champions IV" along with the Adventurers Guild crest. It's worth 50 gp. Each member of the winning team also receive a lifetime membership into the Adventurers Guild.

However, there are other, less tangible benefits to having participated in the fourth annual Challenge of Champions. Since the Adventurers Guild keeps

records of everyone who enters the contest, those who did particularly well might be asked to join future guild expeditions. (This can be an easy way to draw the PCs into further adventures.) In addition, other competitors might end up as close friends, cohorts, or full-fledged party members (or hated rivals, which might be more fun) as a result of their meeting with the PCs during the contest.

The contest officially concludes, and the celebration begins in earnest. Vast amounts of food and drink are consumed, musicians and entertainers are kept busy until the wee hours of the night, and the Thieves' Guild is kept hard at work overseeing the payment of the numerous bets that were placed on the various competitors. Amid all of the carousing, Farthingale is overheard to com-

ment to one of his associates, "Whew! These contests are getting harder and harder to come up with!"

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

The "Challenge of Champions" series is a bit different from most adventures in that the scenarios are artificial; the PCs are in no real danger, no matter what the guild illusionists would have them believe. In addition, there is very little treasure compared to standard D&D adventures. An attempt has been made to make the scenarios equally challenging to PCs of any level, as successfully completing a scenario's goal depends more upon player creativity than PC combat abilities or spell repertoire. Thus, rather than assess Encounter Levels (ELs) to each scenario and base the PCs' earned XPs on them, it's suggested that you simply multiply each PC's final score by 10 and award that many XPs. Thus, a PC with a perfect score of 100 gains 1,000 XPs for the experience of having braved the fourth annual Challenge of Champions. Ω

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CRITICAL THREATS

BY DUNGEON STAFF
CARTOGRAPHY BY
CHRISTOPHER WEST



THE VORTEX

Entering this room is like walking into the middle of a storm. The sound of rushing . . . something fills the air, and a strange green glow lights the walls and ceiling of this natural cavern. Peering into the chamber, you see that both the glow and the strange rushing noise emanate from a massive orifice in the floor, easily 50 feet or more across. Trickling into this gaping maw from worn holes in the rock are small streams of a viscous substance the same color as the glow. They spill over the edge of the pit and plunge out of sight.

A roiling whirlpool of some yellow-green ichor swirls around the inside of the monstrous pit 20 feet below, perpetually fed by streams falling over the sides. Two 5-foot-wide fingers of stone jut from the floor over the hole, separated by a 20-foot gap.

Tactics: This room is a great place to stage a battle with a spellcaster or a creature with excellent mobility (a fly speed or *teleport* ability, for example). Due to the murky lighting conditions, it's also an excellent place to stage an ambush. Stalagmites and stalactites provide areas of deep shadow and make excellent cover.

The height of the room is left vague; it can be as low as 10 feet or as high as 100 feet. A flying villain might be lurking near the ceiling, waiting to drop on unsuspecting characters, or standing in the open on one of the precarious stone bridges over the pit.

The noise of the rushing whirlpool is optional, as well. If you don't feel that it suits the type of whirlpool you've selected (see

below), a completely silent vortex can be highly effective. If you opt for noisy, consider giving PCs anywhere from a -2 to a -10 penalty to Listen checks to detect other noises.

The surface of the stone looks smooth, but that shouldn't deter you from requiring PCs who step near the edge of the hole or on one of the fingers of stone to make Balance checks (DC 15) due to crumbling rock.

You can also vary the speed of the streams and vortex. If you want to make the area less deadly, the streams can move at a bare trickle. If you want to heighten tension, they can move objects 30 or 40 feet per round. You can also require the Balance check of PCs walking near the streams.

Finally, consider the pool's substance. The color is reminiscent of strong acid. If this is the case, PCs who fall in a stream should take 2d6 points of acid damage each round they spend submerged. Those who fall in the vortex should take 10d6 points of acid damage each round. The vortex might be composed of raw sewage, eldritch energy (in a liquid form), or even trapped souls.

If you go with a liquid pool, require characters who fall in the vortex to make Swim checks to avoid drowning (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, page 85). The DCs for these checks can range from 15 (rough water) to 20 (stormy water).

Development: The room is inhabited by a beholder named Yrbraxis that despises intruders. Bent on expanding its realm of influence, it has been sending its allies (beholderkin from *MONSTER COMPENDIUM: Monsters of Faerûn*) and enslaved minions out to conquer the surrounding territories. The beholder prefers simple tactics, hovering near the ceiling and either using its antimagic cone to send flying characters into the whirlpool, or its *telekinesis* ray to pick them up and drop them in the pit.

Consider making the room part of an evil artifact built by a cleric of Nerull. The whirlpool is composed of slime made through a series of rituals that traps the souls of those the cleric and his minions have slaughtered in the name of their god. The slime is collected in vats (after mixing in the vortex) to grow the Children of Decay, a new breed of undead that spreads death and disease wherever it goes.

The room might be part of a forgotten layer of sewers beneath a city. A pack of wererats have made this part of their home. They sift through the filthy sewage looking for lost treasures when they aren't "recruiting" more members for the pack. They've also discovered that the mixing of the whirlpool has led to a new strain of slimy doom (*DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, page 75) that they carefully harvest. They plan to eventually introduce the disease into the groundwater, hoping to cause enough chaos in the city above to provide them with uninhibited looting opportunities. Ω

THE ROCK AND THE HARD PLACE

BY BRIAN CORVELLO

ARTWORK BY JEREMY JARVIS • CARTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG ZIPSE

| Magic Items 🐉 Monsters 🧙 NPCs 🗡 Objects 🏰 Settlements 🕸 Traps

"The Rock and the Hard Place" is a D&D Side Trek adventure designed for four 16th-level player characters. The adventure is intended for good-aligned PCs, and a lawful good cleric or paladin can make the scenario much more interesting. The PCs should have access to plenty of powerful magic weapons and equipment (as befits their high level). While there is no shortage of combat, roleplaying will play a large part in the party's success.

The setting is the business district of a large city: On Oerth, the Free City of Greyhawk does nicely; on Toril, Waterdeep is ideal. Any large, bustling city is appropriate. The DM should become familiar with the powers and abilities of the two key NPCs before running this adventure.

BACKGROUND

Across the planes, forces of good and evil, law and chaos, and different factions within all four wage endless wars for cosmic dominance. Fiendish armies and celestial hosts battle to determine the true metaphysical forces that will rule existence. All of this goes on mostly unseen to mortals of the worlds of the Material Plane, but the PCs—world-wise as they might be—are about to witness a tiny fraction of that struggle.

The teenage street-rat Lisa LaBuran has had a rough life. She's never enjoyed much success as a cutpurse. Her fellow criminals even call her "Bad Luck LaBuran." Recently, however, her bad luck has

plunged to grand depths—far deeper than her own understanding allows.

One day ago, Lisa lifted a purse from an unknowing merchant and escaped undetected. When Lisa opened the purse, she was overjoyed to find 10 platinum coins, a nice pair of gold cufflinks, and a great, big gem! The black onyx, about the size of a walnut, seemed to glow as she touched it.

Unfortunately for poor Lisa, the gem was more than just a valuable stone. Her pickpocket victim was actually a powerful wizard, and the gem was the *Eye of Night's Embrace*, a powerful artifact of the darkest evil. This gem's origins are unknown, but it has a long and bloody history. Lisa could not even begin to comprehend the power of the small gem she placed carefully in a secret pouch sewn into the inside of her trousers.

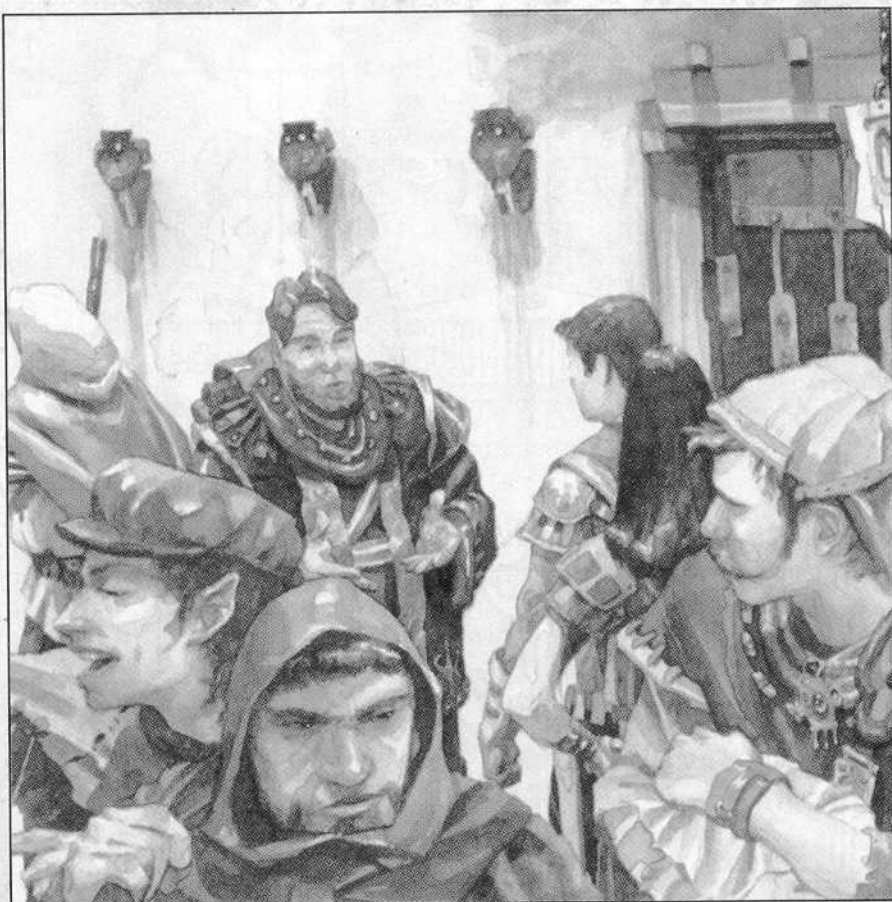
When the gem left the zone of protection in which its previous owner had been hiding it, celestial and infernal alarms sounded. A planetar was the first to realize the *Eye's* location. This mighty steward of law and goodness entrusted a servant, the astral deva Ganamemnon, to travel to the Material Plane and fetch the vile artifact so it could be destroyed. The planetar gave Ganamemnon a talisman that would lead him to the gem like a compass. The deva requested, and was granted, permission to use every means at his disposal. Sacrifices could be made for the greater good.

Soon after, the forces of evil discovered the *Eye's* location as well. A pit fiend from Baator assigned his

lieutenant, a gelugon named Felespar, to obtain the artifact. The pit fiend gave the gelugon a ring with tracking powers similar to the deva's talisman, and told his subordinate to do anything in his power to secure the gem for the forces of darkness.

The two outsiders, disguised as humans, arrived at the city at roughly the same time, and it didn't take long for fiend and celestial to cross paths. Though neither trusted the other, both were of equal strength and didn't want to waste energy on a battle. Instead, the two lawful beings decided on a temporary truce, joining forces to locate the artifact. The deva and the devil agreed not to attack or otherwise inhibit each other until the *Eye of Night's Embrace* was in one of the outsider's hands, at which point all bets were off.

When the PCs meet the current owner of the vile artifact, they unwittingly find themselves caught between the proverbial rock and hard place.



THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

The PCs are in a busy part of the city doing whatever they need to do between adventures: shopping for supplies, gathering information, or possibly taking some much-needed rest. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach an area of the town that is lightly crowded:

As you make your way through the city streets, the crowds begin to thicken. Maybe there's a good sale on, or maybe it's just the time of day. As you navigate the busy street, all of you are nearly bowled over by a young girl covered in dirt and wearing the clothes of a beggar. She must have sprinted out of a nearby side street, since you didn't see her coming. The nondescript girl looks nervously to and fro as she scrambles to her feet.

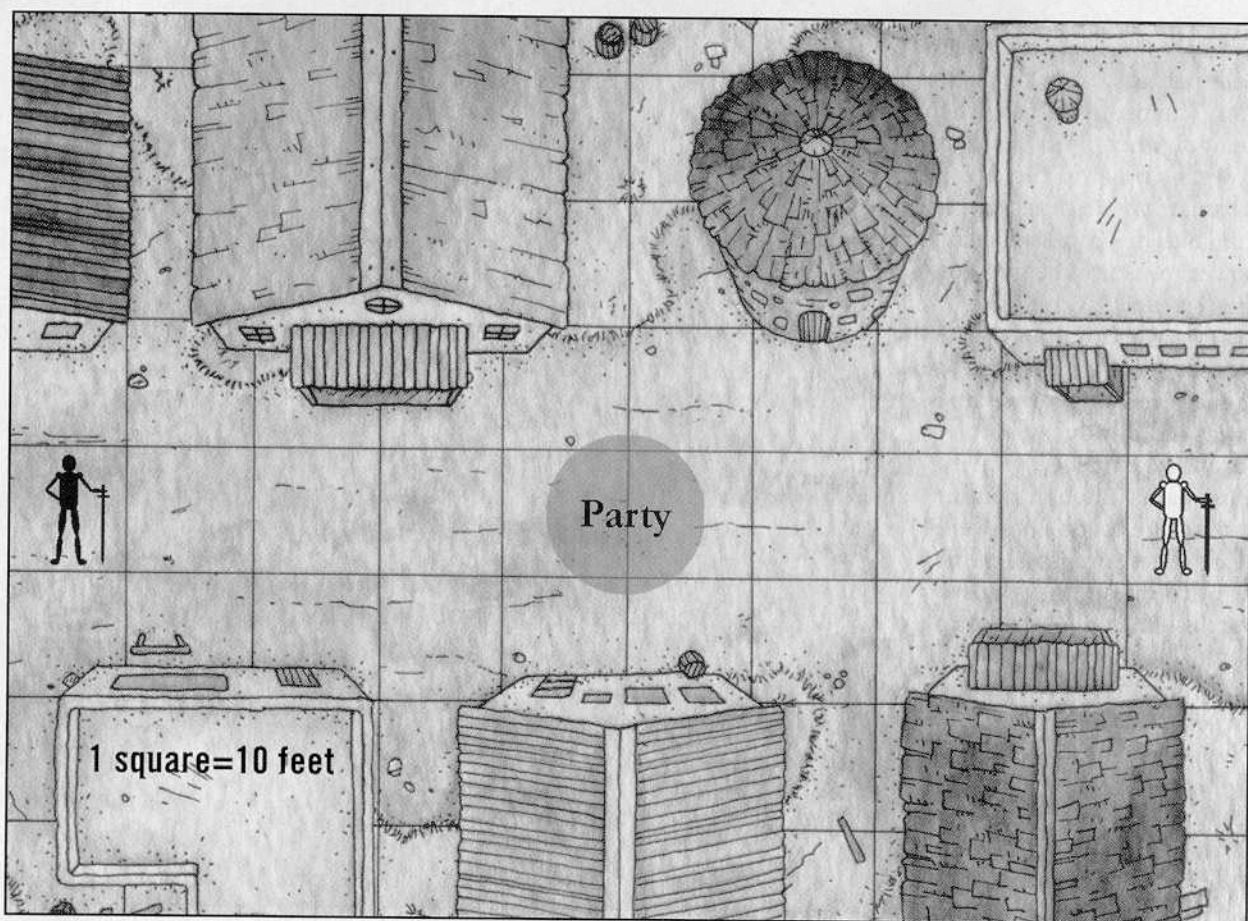
Lisa is a nervous, paranoid wreck. She spent a sleepless night the evening before, thanks to the sinister but unclear whisperings of the gem she carries.

She realizes now that it is magical—and probably evil—but still (rightfully) believes it is worth a fortune. She is unwilling to discard it because of a few harried, sleepless nights. At least, that's the way she felt up until a few minutes before the start of the adventure, as Ganamemnon stormed into the flophouse room where she was staying and demanded to speak with her. She escaped out a window, but the deva has been chasing her (just out of earshot, unfortunately), and the celestial is becoming frustrated. He isn't mad enough to use a truly brazen display of power or assume his true form, nor is he convinced that harming Lisa or using other methods of force are necessary—but he's getting closer to that precipice.

When she finally picks herself up, Lisa can barely put together a coherent sentence. Exhausted and frightened, she blurts out "Help . . . please. He's chasing me . . . wants to kill me . . ." This should at least get the PCs attention.

Creature (EL 4): Lisa is just what she appears to be: a street-rat, beggar, and pickpocket. She is not evil, and she is not truly a threat to the PCs. The object she carries poses the real danger.

✦ **Lisa "Bad Luck" LaBurton, Female Human Rog4:** CR 4; Medium-Size Humanoid (human) (5 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 4d6+8; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13



(touch 13, flat-footed 13); Atk +3 melee (1d4+2/crit 19–20, masterwork dagger), +3 melee (1d4+1/crit 19–20, masterwork dagger); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +9, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +8, Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Open Locks +10, Pick Pocket +10, Spot +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Possessions: Two masterwork daggers, ragged clothing, purse containing 5 gp, 23 cp, two gold cufflinks (50 gp each), and the *Eye of Night's Embrace* (see the *Eye of Night's Embrace* sidebar).

Development: The PCs have 3 rounds to take actions before the first of Lisa's as-yet-unseen pursuers shows up. A successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 15) can get Lisa to calm down and explain that a man with a "big club" has been chasing her through the streets for several hours. She says she doesn't know what he wants (which is a lie—she suspects he is an underling of the wizard she robbed yesterday). Lisa doesn't reveal the gem unless *charmed*, as she doesn't want to lose it. The artifact is tucked in a pocket sewn inside her clothing; finding it on her requires a successful Search check (DC 12).

THE CONFRONTATION

Three rounds after the PCs first encounter Lisa, read or paraphrase the following:

A middle-aged man in merchant's clothing appears from behind a storefront 50 feet away and points to the young beggar-girl. He is portly, handsome, and appears to have no gear other than the fancy mace strapped to his side.

"You there! Young lady!" says the man. "Come here. Step away from those people. I must speak to you!" The man casts a stern look toward the girl and grimaces. "Come now, I tire of this game!" he says impatiently, gesturing for Lisa to approach him. "I won't hurt you!"

This is the astral deva Ganamemnon. He has used his *polymorph self* ability to assume a less threatening form—that of a handsome merchant. Unfortunately, his arrogant attitude hasn't changed with his new shape. Before Lisa or the PCs can consider a course of action, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you can react, a burly voice shouts from behind. "You, there! Halt!" A captain of the city watch, 20 feet away, brandishes a large polearm. Four other city guards stand behind him. "Stay

away from that man, Lisa," the captain shouts. "He's dangerous."

The captain of the watch points at you. "You people! Help me apprehend that scoundrel now, and the city has a 10,000 gold-piece reward for you!"

The captain of the watch is Felespar the gelugon in disguise. He intends to use the PCs to help him get the artifact without fighting the deva. He also drank a *potion of detect thoughts* to scan Lisa's mind, which is how he knows her name.

Creatures (EL 13+): Ganamemnon and Felespar are above-average members of their respective races. Their combined EL is 19, should things go poorly and the PCs decide to fight both outsiders.

➤ **Ganamemnon, Advanced Male Astral Deva:** CR 14; Medium-size Outsider (lawful, good) (6 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 15d8+60; hp 114; Init +9; Spd 50 ft., fly 100 ft. (good); AC 29 (touch 14, flat-footed 25); Atk +24/+19/+14/+9 melee (1d8+12 and stun, +3 *heavy mace of disruption*); SA stun, spell-like abilities; SQ protective aura, damage reduction 10/+1, SR 30, *tongues*, uncanny dodge, immunities, fire resistance 20, +4 racial bonus to saves against poison, low-light vision, darkvision; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +14, Will +13; Str 22, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 20.

Skills: Concentration +22, Diplomacy +15, Escape Artist +23, Hide +23, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +21, Listen +28, Move Silently +23, Sense Motive +22, Spot +28. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Possessions: +3 *heavy mace of disruption*, *amulet of locate object* (allows wearer to cast the spell *locate object*

as a 10th-level sorcerer once per day), *bag of holding* containing 5,000 gp, *boots of speed*.

SQ—Immunities: Ganamemnon is immune to electricity, acid, cold, and petrification.

All other special attacks and qualities are described on pages 31 and 33 of the *Monster Manual*.

Ad-hoc Experience: Award 25% more experience for overcoming Ganamemnon, due to his advanced state.

➤ **Felespar, Advanced Male Gelugon:** CR 13; Large Outsider (lawful, evil) (9 ft. tall); HD 15d8+75; hp 125; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 28 (touch 10, flat-footed 27); Atk +22/+17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+10 and cold, longsword) or +20 melee (1d8+7, 2 claws), and +16 melee (2d4+3, bite), +16 melee (3d4+3 and cold, tail); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.; SA spell-like abilities, fear aura, cold, summon baatezu; SQ damage reduction 20/+2, SR 25, baatezu qualities, regeneration 5; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +15; Str 25, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 22, Wis 22, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +21, Climb +23, Concentration +23, Disguise +21, Jump +22, Knowledge (arcana) +24; Listen +26, Move Silently +18, Search +24, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +24, Spot +26. **Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack.

Possessions: Longsword, *ring of locate object* (allows wearer to cast the spell *locate object* as a 10th-level sorcerer once per day), *ring of mind shielding*, *potion of detect thoughts*, *potion of haste*, *potion of cure serious wounds* (x3).

SA—Fear Aura (Su): This ability works as described on page 53 in the *Monster Manual* (save DC 20).

SA—Cold (Su): This ability works as described on page 53 of the *Monster Manual* (save DC 22).

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Rock and the Hard Place" is designed for 16th-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

10th- to 12th-level: Replace the astral deva with a 10th- to 12th-level half-celestial paladin (match the party's level). Replace the gelugon with a 10th- to 12th-level half-fiend sorcerer (again, matching the party's level). Make sure the two are well stocked with magic items according to their character level (see page 58 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*).

Alternatively, you could replace Ganamemnon and Felespar with an avoral and a cornugon, respectively. To explain their different forms, you could provide each of them with arcane spellcasting companions who have cast illusions or *polymorph* spells on the outsiders in an effort to aid their facade.

13th- to 15th-level: Replace the advanced astral deva and

gelugon with average representatives of their respective races (with stats as found in the *Monster Manual*). Otherwise, play as written.

17th- to 20th-level + : Replace the deva with a 17-HD planar, and the gelugon with a 17-HD pit fiend. Otherwise, play as written.

Alternatively, you can use Ganamemnon and Felespar as written, but provide them with character classes. In an adventure like this, paladin levels (the deva) and blackguard levels (for the devil) are good choices. You could also give the two outsiders cleric levels.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure. Consult page 170 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* (Tables 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

Ad-hoc Experience: Award 25% more experience for overcoming Felespar, due to his advanced state.

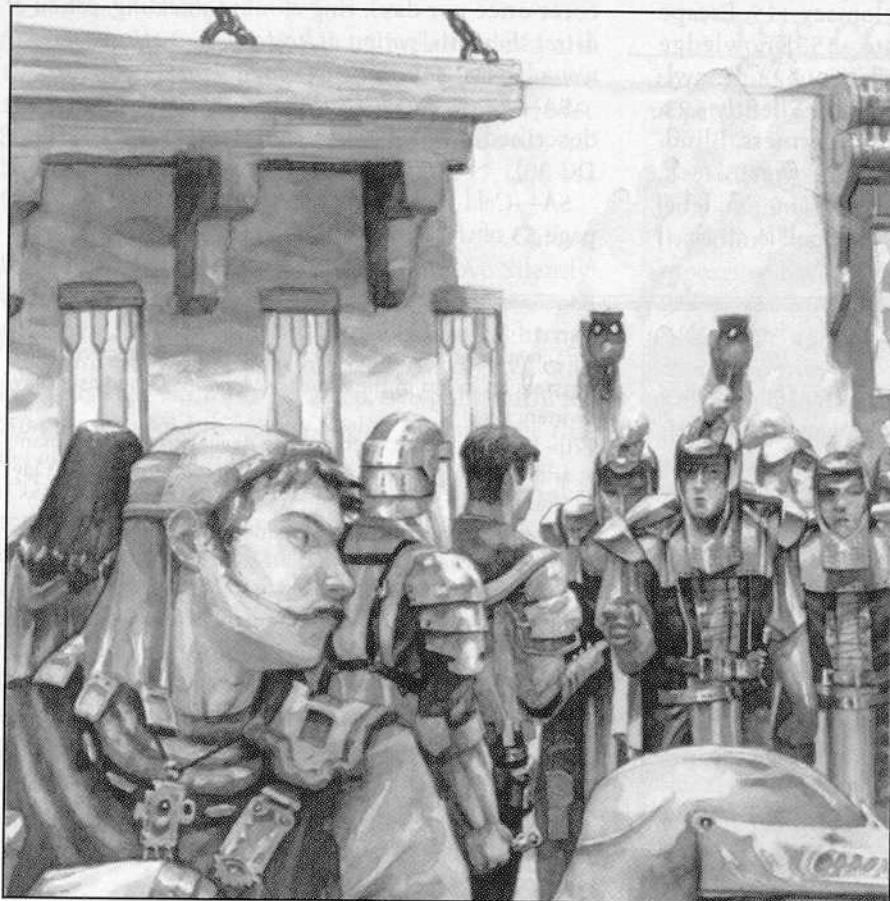
The two constables behind Felespar are the real thing; the devil has used his Bluff skill to convince them he is of superior rank.

♣ **Guards, Male Human War3 (4):** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoids (human) (6 ft. tall); HD 3d8; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 20 ft; AC 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d10+1/crit ×3, halberd) or +4 melee (1d8+1/crit 19–20, longsword); Reach 10 ft. (with halberd); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills: Listen, +6, Sense Motive +4 Spot +6. **Feats:** Alertness, Great Fortitude, Iron Will.

Possessions: Halberd, longsword, breastplate.

Tactics: The PCs must now decide what to do. If they pause to assess the situation, the two disguised outsiders just stare at one another until the PCs make a move. They are bound by their word not to attack each other. If the PCs deliberate too long or make a move one way or the other, one of the outsiders eventually moves to physically seize control of the situation. Before that happens, though, they each make an attempt to get control of the Eye through "negotiation" to save their strength for the battle they know will come after one of them has the artifact in hand.



Felespar is an authoritarian figure, but two things give him away. First, he knows Lisa's name (due to his potion), and if the PCs ask her, she swears she has never met him. Also, the devil is not well-versed about bounties on the Material Plane; here, no criminal who walks the streets unescorted is likely worth 10,000 gold pieces.

Ganamemnon, on the other hand, is full of righteous fury and indignation. He thinks little of mortals, even high-level ones who might have connections more powerful than him. He is determined to retrieve the artifact or die trying, and he is impatient to return to the Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia and complete his quest.

If the PCs hesitate too long or ask the the "captain" any questions, Felespar gets impatient, and says, "Have you no respect for this city's authority? I can't believe this is even an issue. Hand the girl over now or I will have to place all of you under arrest."

Ganamemnon, haughty as only a celestial can be, replies, "Listen people, there is no time for these childish shenanigans. You have no idea what is at stake here. Bring the girl and come with me before someone gets hurt."

A successful Diplomacy check can calm the deva (changing his attitude according to the chart on page 149 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*) and get him to explain, "I need

something the girl has—something very dangerous, especially in the hands of the wrong person." At that he glares down the street at Felespar.

Any attempt to bluff the celestial into backing down (such as saying he has the wrong person) is not likely to work. Ganamemnon gets a +10 circumstance bonus to his already high Sense Motive score because the bluff is unbelievable (his talisman says the gem is on Lisa) and there is a large risk (he cannot risk the Eye of Night's Embrace falling into the wrong hands). Intimidate checks do not work at all. Ganamemnon's arrogance won't let him believe the PCs are capable of physically keeping him from his goal. Such attempts only make him more angry and

THE EYE OF NIGHT'S EMBRACE

This fell artifact was created by fiends for use in their war against the planes of good. Information on the evil relic has been left vague, since the item's powers do not play a role in the adventure, but the following list of powers are eminently suited to an artifact vile enough to warrant the attention of such powerful creatures. If you decide you want to integrate the *Eye of Night's Embrace* into your campaign, consider some or all of the following options:

- The *Eye* increases the chance devils have to summon baatezu by 50%. If power only functions if the devil already has the ability to *gate* in other fiends.
- The *Eye* enables its wielder to cast *desecrate*, *unhallow*, and *horrid wilting* each once per day (as a 20th-level sorcerer).

- The *Eye* enables its bearer to cast *energy drain* 3/day (as a 20th-level sorcerer).

- The *Eye* gives its wielder the ability to resist damage caused by divine power sources (such as the holy damage from a *flame strike* spell or the damage dealt by a *holy smite* spell).

- The *Eye* enables its wielder to ignore *banishment* or *dismissal* spells and effects.

- The *Eye* might have the power to inflict a creature with the fiendish creature template, enabling demons to build an army of fiendish minions.

These are only a few of the powers the *Eye of Night's Embrace* might possess. Stronger powers are possible and encouraged.

impose a -4 circumstance penalty to future Diplomacy checks.

Felespar doesn't respond to diplomacy, bluffs, or intimidation. Like most fiends, he views mortals as little better than vermin, and he is not about to be "sweet-talked" by one. Any such attempts change his attitude from Unfriendly to Hostile. He will posture and threaten further after such tactics, then send his companion guards in the PCs' direction to arrest them and Lisa.

In combat, Felespar sends his guards into battle first, making Bluff checks to get them to do as he bids, if necessary. He sometimes forgets that he's not leading devilish troops, shouting horrible encouragement to the human guards with exclamations like, "Rend the flesh from their bones and string them up on the lamp posts by their innards."

If forced to fight himself, Felespar *polymorphs* back into his normal form immediately. He has no fear of causing mass panic in the crowded street (which is exactly what happens—see **Development** below). He uses his *charm monster* ability on Lisa to bring her close enough so that he can kill her and grab the *Eye*. Holding weak-willed enemies at bay with his *fear* aura, he uses his *teleport without error* ability to escape. If he cannot secure the *Eye*, he *teleports* to the top of a building on the street. He then drinks his *potion of haste* and activates his *fly* ability. If no one is in range to threaten him, he uses his *magic circle against good* ability, then blasts the crowd and the PCs with his *cone of cold*.

Felespar doesn't hesitate to raise a *wall of ice* to separate himself from the PCs and make a grab for Lisa. His goal is to retrieve the artifact, not defeat the characters or Ganamemnon (although Felespar attempts to take Ganamemnon out if the opportunity presents itself). Note that once the devil has the *Eye*, not much can stop him from using his *teleport without error* ability to flee. The key to the PCs' success is keeping Lisa and the *Eye* out of Felespar's clutches.

Ganamemnon remains in human form unless Felespar starts a riot, in which case he heads for Lisa, activating his protective aura as a free action and, if possible, readying an action to use his *holy smite* spell-like ability or his mace. If Felespar is within sight but not near Lisa, Ganamemnon activates his *boots of speed*, then uses his *holy aura* ability on Lisa. He then herds Lisa away from the devil while maintaining a readied action to attack the devil if it appears within reach. Ganamemnon won't use his *blade barrier* ability, as he doesn't want to harm the innocents in the street. If the PCs have turned against Felespar, the deva uses them to hold off the devil while he spirits away Lisa and secures the *Eye*.

Development: If the PCs are fooled and make a move to hand Lisa over to Felespar, Ganamemnon shouts, "You foolish, plane-bound idiots!" He then rushes to grab Lisa (in human form).

Felespar tells his guards to aid the PCs and attack "that fat merchant" while he closes on Lisa. If the PCs don't stop him, the next thing they hear is Lisa's scream as the devil assumes his true form and attacks her in search for the gem. The deva strikes the guards for subdual damage but stops fighting them when he hears Lisa's scream. To the PCs he yells, "Don't just stand there, fools! He's going to kill her!" At this point, the PCs might be too late to save Lisa, since it takes Felespar only 1 or 2 rounds to deal enough damage to kill her. Ganamemnon assumes his true form and rushes to Lisa's side, ignoring further attacks from guards and PCs alike. Once Felespar has Lisa (and therefore the *Eye*), his agreement with the devil ends, and he attacks the gelugon without reprieve.

The sight of the winged celestial or insectoid devil causes a stampede of terrified townsfolk (including the city guards, if alive). More guards arrive on the scene during subsequent rounds, but they stay clear of the battle.

If the PCs do the right thing and begin to herd Lisa toward Ganamemnon, Felespar sends his guards down the street as fast as they can with orders to apprehend Lisa and her new custodians. He then teleports between the PCs and Ganamemnon and drinks his *potion of haste* in anticipation of a fight. If the PCs confront him, he assumes his natural form and attacks.

Lisa does her best to avoid the battling outsiders, cowering behind the heaviest armored PC and taking the total defense action each round (*Player's Handbook*, page 127).

The devil flees, returning to Baator, when reduced to 30 hit points or less. Ganamemnon approaches the PCs and Lisa, assuming his true form if he hasn't already. He explains to them what the struggle was over, what the gem actually is, and assures them that the best course of action is to hand it over. He offers Lisa and the PCs 5,000 gp, to be divided evenly among them, in exchange for the artifact. Lisa quickly agrees, but if the PCs refuse, the deva tries to explain that even if they keep the gem, more celestials and devils will come looking for the artifact. If he is still met with stubborn refusal, the celestial tries to grab Lisa (or the Eye) and fly away.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs save Lisa and deliver the Eye to Ganamemnon, they should receive the experience points they would get for defeating both outsiders. If Lisa is killed, they still receive experience, but probably need to answer to the local authorities about what happened.

Felespar holds a grudge against the PCs if he survives; he had served with a perfect record as a gelugon for almost eight hundred years in Baator, and this blemish on his record (and the wound to his pride) is unbearable. It's entirely likely he recruits a small band of devils and returns to seek revenge on the mortals who thwarted him.

If she survives, Lisa might make a good cohort or follower for a PC. She desperately wants

to be an adventuring rogue and gladly follows the PCs in search of new adventures.

The wizard from whom Lisa stole the gem might show up as well. He undoubtedly had big plans for the artifact and won't appreciate Lisa's or the PCs' meddling in his affairs, whether the artifact ended up in the right hands or not. The wizard might even be an enemy the PCs have faced before—someone with powerful servants or friends.

The Eye might show up again, despite the celestials' best attempts to destroy it. Perhaps the PCs' arch-enemy, whoever that happens to be, learns of the battle in the streets and finds a way to steal the artifact and use it against them. The possibilities are limited only by the DM's imagination. Ω

Brian writes: "This module is dedicated to the late Dr. Paul 'Tony' Androlonus, who helped me slay my own devils."

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BOGGED DOWN

BY TERRY EDWARDS

ARTWORK BY WILLIAM O'CONNOR • CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

| Magic Items Monsters NPCs Objects Settlements Traps

"Bogged Down" is a D&D adventure designed to challenge four 1st-level PCs, but it can be modified for higher levels as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. PCs who successfully complete the adventure should earn enough experience points to gain one level. A cleric and a ranger are both recommended for the adventure, although neither is a necessity. The Elanduen Peninsula can be placed in any coastal area or island with high precipitation.

BACKGROUND

The Isendale family founded Bearden's Hollow 130 years ago as a fishing village that would capitalize on the rich bounty of the Elanduen Peninsula. For generations, the Isendales were the organizing force behind the defense and business of the village. Arundan Isendale and his son, Yohzan, built the first buildings in the village and led a campaign against local lizardfolk, driving them from the land. When the black dragon Uernath sank the village into the swamp, Jelkallan, son of Yohzan, slew the dragon and rebuilt Bearden's Hollow. Jelkallan did not live to see the completion of the new village but passed the duty to his son, Ranuir, who served Bearden's Hollow as governor for many prosperous years. Upon Ranuir's passing, his only son, Sethellen, took on the role of governor. Sethellen was the last of the Isendale line.

In the waning days of Ranuir's rule, he appointed a council to help manage city affairs. The council consisted of local merchants, farmers, and fisherman; Eural Dunaman, Ranuir's business advisor, headed the council. Unknown to Ranuir, Dunaman was a man of greed and evil purpose, patiently plotting against the village and the Isendale family. When Sethellen took the position as governor, Dunaman saw his opportunity to seize control of the village.

Eural conspired with a mercenary cohort, Haiman Gaith, to murder Sethellen.

One night, shortly after Sethellen took office, Gaith, his mercenary group, and Dunaman stormed the Isendale home. Sethellen was not caught completely off guard. He quickly donned the black dragon armor that his grandfather crafted from the hide of Uernath and sent his housekeeper to sound the alarm while he protected his wife. Upon hearing the alarm, the intruders hastily subdued Sethellen and Irewyn Isendale. They carried the couple into the swamp as far as they dared. There, Gaith slit the throats of the Isendales.

Dunaman was in great haste to return to the village and cover his tracks. Hence, when the murderers fled the scene, they failed to notice that Sethellen's wife, Irewyn, still lived. Irewyn was near death and traumatized beyond her mind's capacity to bear as she watched her husband's body sink into the bog. When she recovered some strength, Irewyn fled into the swamp. She lives there still, clinging to the shreds of sanity left to her by that fateful night. Back in Bearden's Hollow, the villagers attributed the attack to vengeful lizardfolk, a tale encouraged by Dunaman.

Dunaman quickly established a town guard to "protect against future raids," hiring Gaith and his men to fill the positions required. With Constable Gaith in his corner and the head seat in the village council, Dunaman was poised to exploit the village. For years now, Dunaman has grown rich at the expense of the village. Deals made with outside trading companies and merchant guilds have capitalized on Bearden's Hollow's fishing and cranberry trade to Dunaman's profit. For the first time in their history, the people of Bearden's Hollow are struggling as they try to meet these increasing demands.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

After waiting out a harsh coastal night in the village of Bearden's Hollow, the PCs are informed by Enmar the innkeeper that they cannot leave the village due to damage from the storm. Enmar asks the PCs to help with repairs, sending them to Father Denethan, at a local cranberry farm, for instructions. Father Denethan explains that bodies from the old city in the swamp washed up into the bogs during the storm. He also tells them of the attack on farmer Burnean and the Isendale home to the north.

At the Isendale home, the PCs meet Eural Dunaman and Haiman Gaith and hear the story of the previous night's attack. The PCs also hear the story of the Isendale's disappearance and the legend of the swamp witch. From the Isendale home, the PCs track a mummy into the swamp (the creature responsible for the attacks), where they encounter the swamp witch, Irewyn Isendale. Irewyn can tell the PCs who the mummy is and show them its tracks to the old city. With some patience and effort, the PCs also learn of Irewyn's past and the identity of Sethellen's murderers. In the sunken central halls of the old city, the PCs find city records that help them identify the bodies found in the cranberry bogs. With the testimony of Irewyn Isendale, the PCs can confront the mummy's murderers and put the mummy to rest.

FOR THE PLAYERS

The adventure begins when the PCs awake in their room at the North Sands Inn in the village of Bearden's Hollow.

Judging from the quiet outside, the storm that forced you and other travelers in the area to take emergency lodging has passed. A warm bed at the North Sands Inn was a welcome end to the weary travel of the day. A low fire burns in the hearth, drying items the innkeeper did not take for cleaning.

Slowly the door to the room opens, and the rosy, plump face of Enmar the innkeeper peers around it. "I've brought your traveling clothes, dried and pressed." He shuffles in, laying the clothes on the table near the door. "I'm afraid that I also bring bad tidings for those who wish to continue their travels today. It would seem the storm has washed out all roads to the south. Mind you, folk are working to drain the mess, but most volunteers are being sent to the old Isendale home. I hear there's plenty of damage there. Tales speak of an attack from the bog in the night, but I started no such rumor. I dare say a few extra hands would be appreciated and might speed travelers on their way."

If the PCs do not volunteer to help at this point, Enmar officially asks for aid on the village's behalf. He offers lodging and food (compliments of the town coffers) for the duration of the PCs' stay, but little more. PCs who decline to help, however, are informed by Enmar that their room is "reserved for the next few weeks and they will need to find other accommodations." Since the North Sands is the only inn for twenty miles, that might prove difficult. If the PCs agree to help, Enmar sends them along the North Road to the cranberry farm for instruction.

BEARDEN'S HOLLOW

Bearden's Hollow (Village): Conventional; AL NG; 200-gp limit; Assets 20,000 gp; Population 410; Isolated (98% human, 2% halfling).

Authority Figures: Head councilman Eural Dunaman, male human Exp1.

Important Characters: Haiman Gaith, male human Ftr2; Father Denethan, male human Clr1.

Others: Town guards, human War1 (10); Exp3 (4); Exp 2 (9); Exp1 (21); Com1 (361).

Notes: Bearden's Hollow's main industries are fishing and cranberry farming. A 10-foot-high wooden palisade encloses the village with a pair of reinforced wooden gates to the southwest and east.

Reinforced Wooden Gate: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 25.

CRANBERRY CORPSES

Jaiman Burnean runs the cranberry farm. During the storm he was repairing a bog wall when he found the first body. The corpse had washed into Burnean's cranberry bog from the swamp, along with several others. Wading into the turbulent bog, the farmer turned up more bodies. The mummy attacked at this point. Sethellen struck once before Jaiman ran back to his house in fear.

A work crew is searching the cranberry bogs. Thirteen bodies have been recovered so far. Father Denethan (male human Clr1 of St. Cuthbert; hp 6; Heal +4, Knowledge—local +4) is overseeing the collection and reburial of the corpses.

Along the edge of the swamp runs a series of flooded fields hedged with low wooden walls. A blanket of crimson berries floats in the fields. There are several people wading through the man-made bogs, churning the water with thick staves. Near the southernmost field sits a farmhouse and three outbuildings. Thirteen bodies are laid in a row between the buildings and the bogs. A man is working to wrap the bodies in white cloths. Judging from his garments, he is a clergyman.

Father Denethan has served as cleric to Bearden's Hollow for nearly thirty years. He is an elderly man with plump features and a kind face. Denethan is currently preparing the bodies for blessing and reburial. PCs are welcome to help or speak with Father Denethan.

PCs examining the bodies notice how well preserved they are. Other than discoloration of the skin, the bodies show virtually no decay. If questioned about this, Father Denethan is willing to relay the following information:

- The bodies were inhabitants of the old city that lies buried in the swamp. Deceased are no longer buried on the peninsula but taken to higher ground.
- The bog protects bodies from decomposing elements, resulting in excellent preservation.
- In the earlier years of the village, detailed logs were kept of families and their histories. If he had the old city's records, Denethan could identify the bodies for a proper reburial.
- This is not the first time bodies have washed up in the bog, but it is the first time in a while something has come out of the bog to attack townsfolk. Father Denethan is concerned about the wound Burnean took during the attack. If PCs wish to speak to Jaiman Burnean, the cleric escorts them into the house.

• The Isendale home to the north was also attacked during the night. Denethan suggests that the PCs might want to speak with Councilman Dunaman, the current resident of the house.

Jaiman Burnean (male human Com1; hp 4; Fort +0, Con 11) is resting, as per Father Denethan's instructions. When the mummy attacked him, Jaiman was struck on the right forearm. Although little initial damage was done, the wound is incubating mummy rot. Jaiman feels fine and wants to tend to his cranberries; he is anxious about letting them float around the bogs unharvested. PCs examining Jaiman's arm notice a black bruise turning green and moist in the center. As the PCs study the bruise, Jaiman recounts his harrowing encounter with the mummy the night before:

"I was tending the bog wall so as not to lose the harvest to wind and rain. A mighty storm was blowing last night, as you know. I should have expected the bodies to come washing up—usually do during a storm. There were more than I had ever seen this time, so I waded in and started pulling them to solid ground when it happened. The thing splashed up next to me from out of nowhere, moaning a horrible noise that shivered my bones.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Bogged Down" is designed to challenge four 1st-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

2nd- to 3rd-level PCs: The adventure provides a moderate challenge at this level. Run the adventure as written but with the following additional changes:

- Allow the assassin vine in the "Lair of the Swamp Witch" to use its *entangle* ability.
- Advance Sethellen's HD by two (making him an 8-HD mummy).
- Increase the level of Haiman Gaith to 4th level and consider adding more mercenaries to the final confrontation.
- Add one warrior level to one of the three warrior mercenaries with Gaith and Dunaman.
- Add one more aristocrat level to Dunaman.

4th-level PCs: At this level more drastic measures are needed to provide an adequate challenge to the PCs. Run the adventure with the changes outlined above, as well as the following alterations:

- Expand the dungeon in "The Old City" and add encounters. A couple normal mummies, skum, or large alligators make for interesting encounters in an expanded dungeon. This also gives Sethellen somewhere to flee if turned.
- Make Sethellen a 9-HD mummy. Among the other changes associated with advancing the creature, remember to give it another feat.

- Increase the level of Haiman Gaith to 6th-level.
- Make all three mercenaries 2nd-level warriors.
- Give Dunaman another rogue level (making him an Rog2/Ari2).

5th-level and up: It's possible that the PCs will possess too much magic and turning power for the mummy to stand a chance. However, Sethellen's power can be increased in an interesting way by providing him with class levels. In addition to the changes outlined above, consider the following additional modifications:

- Make Sethellen a 9-HD mummy with a fighter level or a sorcerer level for each level of the party. Thus a 5th-level party might face a 9-HD advanced Sethellen with one level of fighter. A 7th-level party might face a 9-HD advanced Sethellen with three levels of sorcerer.
- Keep Haiman Gaith one or two levels above the party's level. Thus a 6th-level party would face a 7th- or 8th-level Gaith. Do the same with Dunaman.

• The mercenaries accompanying Gaith and Dunaman can change in several ways to make them more challenging. Consider making them fighters instead of warriors, or add more soldiers to the mix. You could also make one of the mercenaries a cleric.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise the amount of treasure in the adventure. Consult page 170 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* (Tables 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

He—I'm sure now it was a man, or was at one time—hit me once in the arm, and I ran. I don't claim to know what happened to it or where it went, but I tell you I barred all the doors and windows until day came."

Burnean can show the PCs where he was attacked. A successful Search or Wilderness Lore check (DC 14) discovers tracks leaving the cranberry bogs heading north. The mummy left the tracks as it made its way to the Isendale home.

THE ISENDALE HOME

Eural Dunaman took up residence in the Isendale home shortly after the murder of Sethellan ten years earlier. Loriann, the same housekeeper who served the Isendales, still lives in the house and now works for Dunaman. When the mummy attacked the main house last night, Loriann ran for the alarm bell. Morning dawned dreary and overcast, but the daylight drove the mummy to seek shelter. As the alarm bell rang loud through the chill morning air, the mummy fled into the swamp.

The road and the tracks from Jaiman Burnean's cranberry farm lead to the main gate in the outer wall of the Isendale home. A 10-foot-high wall surrounds the estate.

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text as the PCs approach the residence:

Several men are working to mount a new door in a high wall surrounding what must be the Isendale home. Broken splinters of the old door are piled nearby. The men are dressed uniformly in scale mail armor bearing an eagle crest.

The men are mercenaries under the command of Haiman Gaith, the village constable. The mummy battered the door to pieces during the storm. If the PCs question the mercenaries, they are taken by one of the men to Dunaman and Gaith in the house.

PCs who explore the ground outside the work area and succeed at a Search check (DC 14) discover tracks leading to the Isendale home from the south and another set heading northwest into the swamp. The bog mummy made the tracks. A character with the Track feat can make a Wilderness Lore check (DC 14) to follow the tracks south to their origin at Jaiman Burnean's cranberry farm. See "Tracking in the Swamp" if PCs follow the tracks into the swamp.

The Isendale house is a large, two-story building with a tall tower in the northwest corner used to keep watch over the surrounding area. As the PCs enter the house, they notice that the doors have been damaged in the same manner as the gate but seem to have with-

stood the assault. The PCs are led to the living area by a mercenary, who then returns to his labor, where they find Dunaman and Gaith conversing quietly. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

Ornate double doors stand open to a handsomely appointed living area. A dragon skull hangs over the fireplace with jaws open menacingly. Two men sit in plush chairs by the raging fire, drinking from tall glasses. The tall, lean man on the left remains seated as the other rises in greeting. This second man is of short stature but generous proportion. The man is finely dressed—clearly the master of the house.

Eural Dunaman introduces himself as the Head Councilman of Bearden's Hollow before introducing Constable Gaith, who remains silent. If asked about the attack or the strange occurrences at the cranberry farm, Dunaman provides the following information:

- In the early hours of the morning, a loud pounding on the door awakened Dunaman. Suspecting the worst, he rang the alarm bell in the tower. The pounding stopped soon afterward. (Actually, Loriann rang the bell while Dunaman cowered in his bedroom.)

- Dunaman figures it was either lizardfolk, the foul magic of the swamp witch, or both that attacked his home.

- A vile witch is sometimes seen on the outskirts of the swamp. She lives deep within the mire. Periodic attempts to put an end to her evil have failed. Dunaman can cite no examples of her evil nor even prove she exists.

- Dunaman plans to spend the night in the village at the temple of St. Cuthbert with Father Denethan.

As the PCs speak with Dunaman, Loriann the housekeeper enters with several bags packed for both herself and her liege. When Dunaman is finished speaking, Loriann tells the PCs of the night the Isendales were taken:

"Last night was eerily similar to the night when the Isendales were abducted from this very house. Sethellen and his wife Irewyn were the last of the Isendale family, which governed Bearden's Hollow since the old city was built. I served them as their housekeeper and hoped to be their child's nanny when the time came.

"It must have been about ten years ago when it happened. Lord Sethellen Isendale awakened me in the dead of night. I knew something was wrong because he was putting on that black dragon armor his grandfather passed down. He told me to climb the tower and ring the alarm bell, as we were under

attack. That's just what I did, and I didn't stop ringing the bell until help came. By then, it was too late. Both Sethellen and Irewyn were gone. The council figured it was the lizardfolk. I've lived here for nearly fifty years and have yet to see one of their kind on the peninsula."

Loriann (female human Com1; hp 3) does not know who abducted the Isendales ten years ago, nor does she know who or what is responsible for last night's attack. She looks forward to staying in the village proper until all is well again.

INTO THE SWAMP

The coastal swamp of the Elanduen Peninsula is a difficult area to traverse. Movement for Medium-size creatures is reduced by half; Small creatures move at one-quarter normal. During autumn months, wind and rain are constant. No matter how light or severe the elements, the effects of the wind and rain automatically extinguish any unprotected flames. There is also a 50% chance of extinguishing protected flames such as lanterns. Visibility is reduced by half, resulting in a -4 penalty to Spot, Search, and Listen checks. The poor weather also imposes a -4 penalty to ranged weapon attacks.

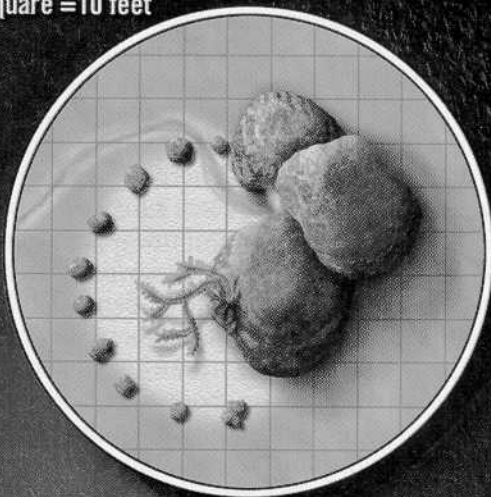
TRACKING IN THE SWAMP

The adjacent map of the Elanduen Peninsula shows the well-traversed trails of Irewyn the Swamp Witch and the recent tracks of Sethellen the mummy. The soft mud of the swamp makes initial tracking relatively easy. However, constant rain and standing water make tracking over longer distances more difficult. For every hour spent searching for tracks near the trails marked on the map, allow a Search or Wilderness Lore check. Only a PC with the Track feat can follow tracks with a DC higher than 10.

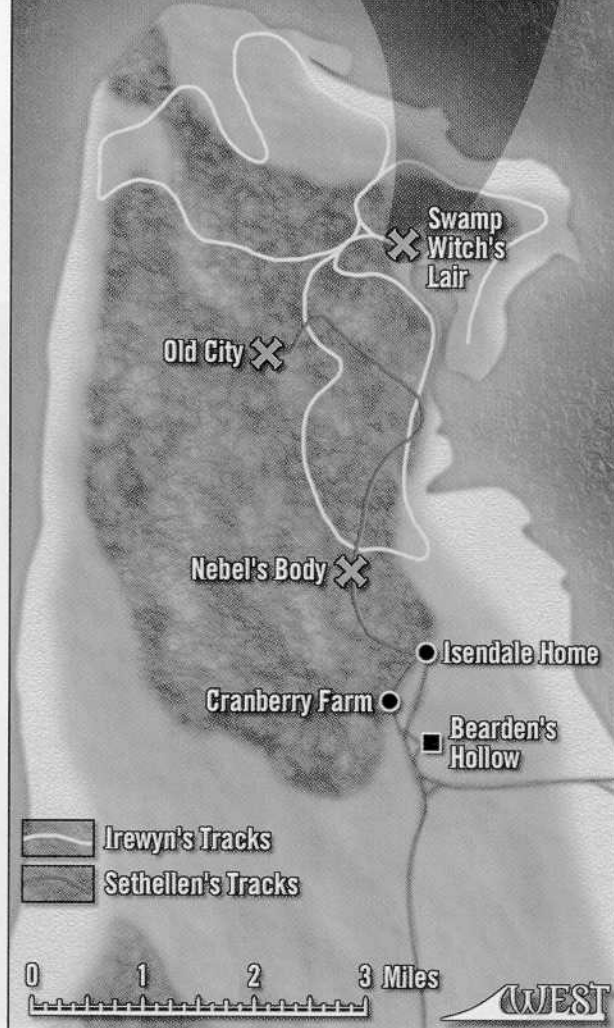
Irewyn's trails are regularly traveled but concealed well enough to throw off most would-be trackers (DC 10). The recent rains have flooded many points in the trails, requiring a new skill check about every quarter mile. The tracks of the mummy Sethellen pass through the swamp with no care for obstacles. A Wilderness Lore check (DC 14) is required every mile to follow the mummy's tracks through standing water bogs. Lost trails can be found with another skill check for each hour of searching. At the points where Irewyn's trail and the mummy's tracks cross, give PCs a free Search or Wilderness Lore check to determine whether they notice the crossing trails; PCs tracking the mummy who roll below DC 14 on this check mistake Irewyn's trail for that of the mummy's.

The Swamp Witch's Lair

1 square = 10 feet



The Elanduen Peninsula



PCs following tracks move at half normal speed (or at normal speed with a -5 penalty on the check) or one-third normal speed, including the movement penalty of the swamp.

CRAB SEASON (EL 1)

This encounter can occur whenever the PCs are within a quarter-mile of the ocean.

The crabs caught by the fishermen of the peninsula are a delicacy, and they fetch a high price in the markets of the mainland. Sea storms wash ashore an abundant harvest of crabs for those willing to brave the creature's pincers. Experienced fishermen leave the crabs alone, preferring to catch their bounty with traps at sea, warning "one never knows what the mother ocean will bring to shore when she's angry." In this case, the monstrous storm of the previous night has brought with it some monstrous crabs.

Creatures (EL 1): The crabs are hiding on shore, recovering from their battle with the storm. They are famished and attack the PCs on sight.

➤ **Monstrous Crabs (3):** CR 1/2; Small Animal (3 ft. diameter, 1 ft. tall); HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., 20 ft. swim; AC 17 (touch 13, flat-footed 15); Atk +2 melee (1d3, 2 claws); SA improved grab, squeeze; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Hide +8, Spot +7. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (claw).

SA—**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the monstrous crab must hit an opponent of its size or smaller with a claw attack.

SA—**Squeeze (Ex):** A monstrous crab that gets a hold of an opponent with its improved grab ability automatically deals damage with both claws.

TRIAL OF THE LIZARDFOLK (EL 2)

This encounter can occur anywhere on the peninsula but is particularly useful if the PCs are having a hard time in the swamp or are lost. PCs attempting to follow Irewyn or the mummy notice a new set of tracks—belonging to a lizardfolk druid named Ualeyn—crossing the trail. Lost PCs stumble upon the tracks with a successful Search or Wilderness Lore check (DC 8).

Although the lizardfolk were forced off the peninsula decades ago, the area is still of vital importance to the scattered tribes across the bay. When promising males come of age, they are sent to the peninsula, Elme den Semuanya (nest of Semuanya), to test their survival skills. Bringing nothing with them but their wits, the young lizardfolk must find their way home. Three lizardfolk were brought to the peninsula three days ago but were separated during the storm. Ualeyn is one of them.

Read or paraphrase the following if the PCs run into Ualeyn while trekking through the swamp:

Meticulously creeping through the foliage ahead is the source of the tracks. A hunched, reptilian humanoid is taking great care to move stealthily among the swamp grass. The creature pauses every few steps to sniff the air and examine the ground. It carries a large club in its clawed hands.

Creature: Ualeyn is a young druid of high birth within his tribe. At the onset of the storm, Ualeyn sought shelter in the swamp while his companions attempted the journey south. The druid weathered the storm and with the new day has befriended a raven named Trinkel. The pair are currently hunting for food before beginning their travels together.

♣ **Ualeyn, Male Lizardfolk Drd 1:** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (aquatic, reptilian) (5 ft. 11 in. tall); HD 3d8+3; hp 19; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws), +0 melee (1d4, bite); or +2 melee (1d10+1, greatclub); SQ nature sense, spells; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Animal Empathy +4, Balance +4, Handle Animal +4, Jump +7, Swim +9, Wilderness Lore +6. **Feats:** Multiattack, Track.

Spells Prepared (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—create water, cure minor wounds, know direction; 1st—entangle, magic fang.

Possessions: Greatclub.

➤ **Trinkel, Raven:** hp 1; *Monster Manual* 201.

Tactics: Ualeyn is naturally distrustful of humans, since he has been told horrible stories about them since he was born. He does not, however, hate them and will not attack without provocation. Ualeyn is initially suspicious (treat as Unfriendly; see page 149 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*), but he is curious and willing to parley from a distance. If attacked, Ualeyn casts *entangle* and attempts to flee. He will not allow Trinkel to enter combat, ordering the raven to take flight.

Development: If the PCs manage to ease Ualeyn's suspicions and befriend him, he can aid them on their quest. He followed Irewyn's trail to her home but did not approach due to the assassin vine growing there. Ualeyn has also discovered the mummy's tracks but chose not to follow them, claiming, "I didn't like the scent of the tracks and do not wish to meet the one who made them." Ualeyn is willing to guide the PCs to Irewyn's home (see "Lair of the Swamp Witch") or show them the mummy's tracks. In either case, he will not fight with the party.

NEBEL'S BODY

As noted in "Trial of the Lizardfolk," three young lizardfolk males were brought to the peninsula by their tribe. Their goal was to return to their village on their own, having honed their survival skills in the tribal homeland. When the storm separated them, one of the lizardfolk, Nebel, counted himself lucky to find shelter in a hollow tree on the eastern edge of the swamp. In the morning, however, his luck ran out when he encountered the bog mummy. The young lizardfolk was no match for the mummy and stood paralyzed with fear as the life was pounded from him. Nebel's body now lies lifeless and half-submerged in the swamp.

PCs tracking Sethelen find the body next to the hollow tree where Nebel spent his last night. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach this point in the swamp:

The body of a reptilian humanoid lies partially buried in the mud of the swamp. Its contorted position suggests many broken bones and a cruel, merciless murder.

Treasure: Nebel didn't carry much, but if the PCs search his body, they find his greatclub, a pouch with 20 gp inside, and a *potion of water breathing*.

THE SWAMP WITCH

Irewyn was the wife of Sethelen Isendale. Thought dead, she now lurks in the swamp, using her knowledge of the surrounding area to keep safe from trespassers.

The dreary landscape of the swamp gradually gives way to firm ground and a well-groomed clearing. A large rock covered with vines and moss sits at the eastern side of the clearing. A well-spaced ring of stones surrounds the rock in a 30-foot-radius semicircle. Wisps of smoke drift from an opening at the base of the rock.

PCs can make a Wilderness Lore or Knowledge (nature) check (DC 10) to notice that the area inside the ring of stones has been cleared of vegetation. Irewyn did this to prevent the assassin vine from using its *entangle* ability. If Ualeyn is present, he can point out the assassin vine.

The opening at the base of the rock leads to a cave that serves as Irewyn's

home. Irewyn has made the cave as comfortable as possible. The cave is only 10 feet in diameter and 5 feet at the highest point.

Irewyn uses the assassin vine growing above her cave as a guardian. She has mastered the vine over time, pruning it and clearing dangerous vegetation from its area of influence. The vine attacks anyone approaching the cave entrance who doesn't take proper precautions (as described below).

Creature (EL 2): Walking outside the ring of stones and approaching the cave along the face of the rock circumvents the vine's attack. Due to the rock overhang and Irewyn's pruning of the vine, it cannot reach anyone entering in this manner. The assassin vine cannot use its *entangle* ability on anyone inside the ring of stones.

➤ **Assassin Vine:** hp 30; *Monster Manual* 20.

IREWYN'S CAVE (EL 1)

If the PCs enter Irewyn's cave, read or paraphrase the following:

A short narrow hall ascends to a small cavern dimly illuminated from within. Crude wooden hooks line the hall. A weathered cloak hangs from the hook nearest the cavern. The smell of strong herbs fills the cave.

Creature: Irewyn is inside, cooking a stew made from the abundant plants of the swamp. She greets the PCs as old friends, inviting them to sit and join her for a meal.



Irewyn has been living in the swamp since the murder of her husband Sethellen ten years ago. She managed to keep her sanity and stay alive by remaining in a survivalist state of mind. Over the years, Irewyn has prospered in the harsh environment and learned to commune spiritually with nature. As a result of relying so heavily on these newfound skills and abilities, she has managed to repress the memories of Sethellen's murder and her own trauma at fleeing Bearden's Hollow.

Irewyn has not forgotten courtesy, however. She tries to be a good host, offering food, drink, lodging, and even healing if needed. Questioning Irewyn about Bearden's Hollow, the mummy, or anything regarding her old life (including the vicious scar across her throat) causes her to lapse into alternating catatonia and mindless panic; treat Irewyn as though she were confused (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, page 84). The effect lasts as long as the PCs question her. On a roll resulting in "act normally for 1 round," Irewyn faces her trauma, overcomes it briefly, and relates any of the following information (one piece per successful roll):

- The mummy is her husband Sethellen returned from death. She has tracked him to the old city and can tell the PCs how to get there if they desire.
- Sethellen was murdered and left to sink into the swamp as she watched. While relating the story, Irewyn touches the gruesome scar on her neck from the failed murder attempt.
- The murderers came in the night and dragged her and Sethellen into the swamp. She recognized only one of the men: Eural Dunaman.

Irewyn becomes almost catatonic with despair and anguish after recalling the events of her husband's murder. Facing the pain she has held back for ten years is not an instant cure, but she no longer lapses into a confused, overwhelmed state when confronted with information about the events of the past. Irewyn helps the PCs in any way she can, but she will not enter combat in her current condition. She is reluctant to confront her undead husband and refuses to do so unless magically coerced.

Irewyn Isendale, Female Human Adp2: CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 9 in. tall); HD 2d6; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +1 melee (1d6, staff); SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +4 Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +3, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (nature) +4, Wilderness Lore +7. **Feats:** Blind Fight, Skill Focus (Wilderness Lore).

Spells Prepared (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—create water, cure minor wounds, light; 1st—cure light wounds, endure elements.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, local herbs.

THE OLD CITY

Uernath the black dragon attacked the village of Bearden's Hollow nearly a century ago. The buildings Uernath did not destroy sank into the swamp. Villagers evacuated and never reclaimed what was swallowed by the swamp.

The same flooding that unearthed bodies from the swamp has also revealed an entrance to the old city. Most of the old town hall remains intact.

After attacking the Isendale home, Sethellen wandered into the swamp. He eventually found the entrance to the old city. The bog mummy is waiting out the next day and a half before venturing to Bearden's Hollow again.

1. ENTRY

Through the mist emerges the dark shape of a small building. The wooden structure is submerged in the swamp at an angle suggesting that more of it lies buried underground. An archway struggles to rise above the floor of the swamp, managing a 3-foot tall entrance. A rotting sign over the arch proclaims "Bearden's Hollow Town Hall."

PCs who have either tracked the mummy to this area or make a successful Search or Wilderness Lore check (DC 14) find tracks entering the town hall.

Small rivulets of water flow through the waist-deep mud of this room. The double doors opposite the entrance stand open, showing signs of forced entry. The water flow through the room has washed away any further tracks.

2. MEETING ROOM (EL 1)

This large circular room is pitched at a steep angle. A thin layer of water flows from the double doors at the high point of the room. The water trickles over the warped, slime-covered floor and drains into many small cracks between the wood planks. Long rotted remains of the room's furniture are piled along the wall opposite the double doors at the room's lowest point.

The three doors in the room all stand ajar. Mud spills from each of the doorways, merging into the slimy water flow of this room.

This room was once used as a council meeting room to make decisions concerning the village of Bearden's Hollow. A large table and many chairs, now rotten, are piled against the wall opposite the double doors. The floor is angled and slick with a layer of slime. A successful Balance check (DC 10) allows movement in the area at half speed. A failure

results in no movement for 1 round, while a failure by 5 or more means a fall. A falling PC slides down the floor, crashing into the table, chairs, and standing water collected against the far wall of the room.

Trap: Combatants in the meeting room must make a Balance check (DC 10) each round or fall prone. Furthermore, if more than 200 pounds of weight occupies a 10-foot square anywhere on the weakened floor, the rotting boards and supports below give way. Anyone occupying that space falls 20 feet into the building's lower level.

↗ **Weakened Floor (20 feet deep):** CR 1; no attack roll necessary (2d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20). *Note:* The trap cannot be disabled; each 10-foot square area functions as a different trap that can only be triggered once.

3. BLOCKED CORRIDOR

The lattice walls of this corridor are bowed inward under the weight of the mud they support. A dense, twisted network of roots woven through the lattice seems to be holding up the walls. The floor is covered in mud, rock, and wood debris about 2 feet deep.

Originally, this corridor was a lattice-walled walkway to another building. Over the years, mud has seeped through the latticework and formed a knee-deep sludge. The ceiling collapsed during the storm, blocking the corridor with mud and rock. Sethellen has forced the door to this corridor open in search of a place to "rest."

4. MUDDY HALL (EL 2)

Thick mud fills this lattice-walled corridor to a height of 4 feet. A tangle of roots twists through the latticework and hangs from the ceiling. The overwhelming smell of acrid mud permeates the corridor.

Like area 3, the walls of this corridor are wooden lattices. The mud in this 7-foot-tall corridor stands 4 feet deep. Movement through the mud is half normal.

Creatures: Three monstrous centipedes lair in this chamber. Their nest is located

near the double doors to the library (area 6). They attack anyone approaching within 15 feet of their nest. The centipedes move and attack without penalty over the surface of the mud. The centipedes flee immediately if Sethellen approaches.

➔ **Monstrous Centipede (3):** hp 3, 2, 2; *Monster Manual* 207.

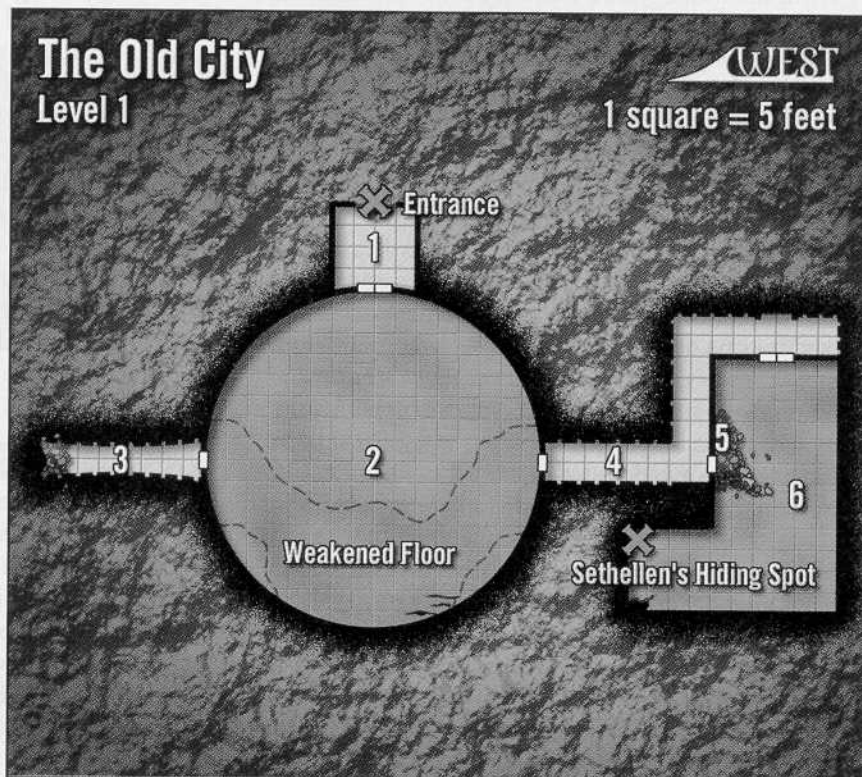
5. BLOCKED DOOR

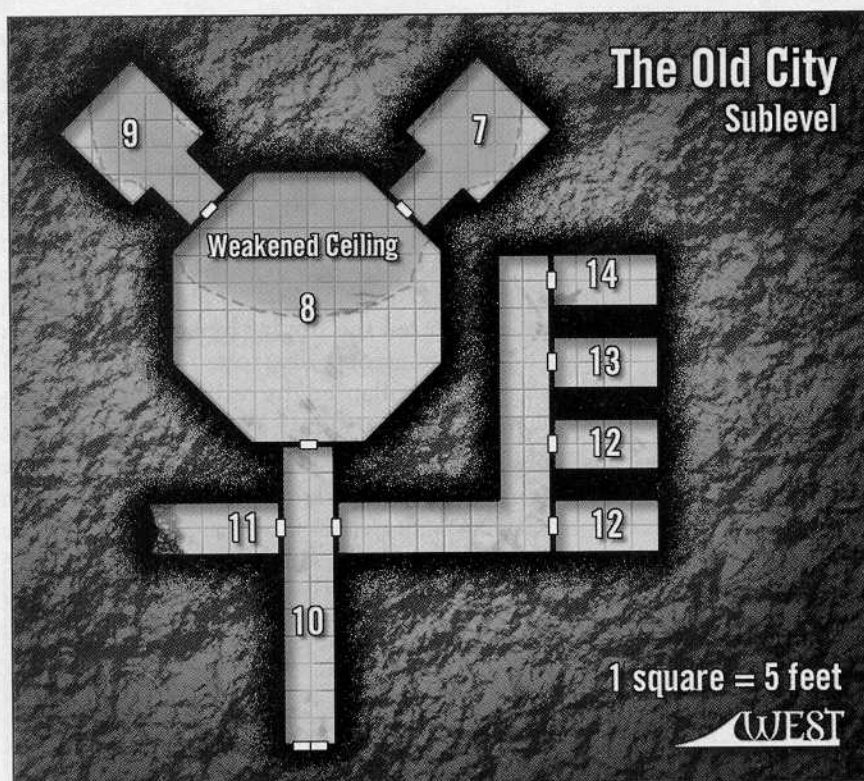
Sethellen entered the library by bashing through this door. His efforts destroyed the weakened doorframe and collapsed the ceiling. Sethellen dug his way free of the rubble but the door was rendered impassable.

6. LIBRARY (EL 3)

The smell of damp, rotting wood hangs heavy in this room. Decaying tables, desks, and shelves furnish the area, their contents strewn over the water-soaked floor. A mound of rock and mud dominates one wall, where it appears the ceiling has collapsed. Dim light filters through a small hole above the debris, along with a small, steady stream of murky water.

The library served more as a work area for cartographers, artists, and local historians than a repository for books. PCs who succeed at a Search check (DC 10) find mostly waterlogged items along with some





undamaged maps, artwork, history texts, and city records. If the PCs search the entire room (this takes about 10 minutes with the whole party taking 10), they can gather enough reference material to help Father Denethan identify the bodies for reburial.

From the library there are two exits other than the unblocked door to area 4. A 1-foot-diameter hole at the top of the pile of rubble blocking the door to area 4 can be enlarged with 2 rounds of digging to allow a Small creature to pass (3 rounds of digging for a Medium-size creature). The other exit is a hole in the floor leading to area 14. The hole is large enough to accommodate most Medium-size creatures.

Creature (EL 3): Sethellen lurks here. The mummy hides among the fallen shelves and books in the corner marked on the map. If undisturbed, he "rests" for one day. Allow Listen checks for Sethellen depending on the PCs' noise level. If PCs enter the mummy's corner, he attempts to surprise them. Allow the PCs a Spot check opposed by Sethellen's Hide check to avoid being surprised.

Sethellen looks like the bodies that washed up in the bog. His skin is blackened and resembles tough leather but is otherwise perfectly preserved. PCs in melee combat with Sethellen notice his black dragon armor and the gaping wound across his neck. Sethellen attacks until he or his enemies are slain.

➤ **Sethellen Isendale, Bog Mummy:** CR 3; Medium Undead (6 ft. 2 in. tall), HD 6d12+3, hp 46; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 9, flat-footed 21);

Atk +3 melee (1d6+4 and mummy rot, slam); SA despair, mummy rot; SQ undead, resistant to blows, damage reduction 5/+1, fire vulnerability; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 8, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills: Hide +5*, Listen +9, Move Silently +5*, Spot +9. Feats: Alertness, Toughness.

*Includes armor check penalty.

Note: See the *Monster Manual* (page 138) for a description of a mummy's special attacks and qualities.

Possessions: Masterwork black dragon hide armor. (Sethellen donned his family's hereditary armor hastily, and the suit is incomplete. Thus, the armor bonus is only +4, and the armor check penalty is -3. The missing pieces are long since lost.)

Tactics: The mummy attacks the nearest PC first, relentlessly pursuing any who flee. A direct confrontation with Sethellen could lead to disaster for low-level characters. To even the odds, the PCs need an advantage. One possibility is to lure the mummy into the meeting room (area 2) where a more dextrous party could exploit the hazardous flooring. Another option is to ignite the oil in the storage closet (area 14).

Development: Sethellen does not pursue fleeing PCs once outside the old city but begins heading toward Bearden's Hollow. If the PCs manage to slay Sethellen, he is unable to attack Bearden's Hollow later (see "Back to Town"). When the body is cleaned up, it is easily identified by many of the townspeople, including Father Denethan. Even those who do not recognize Sethellen know of the black dragon armor he wore.

OLD CITY SUBLEVEL

The city's sublevel was designed as an emergency shelter and defensive position. Now the area is a flooded cavern that serves as a graveyard for those who fled here.

The mud floor is submerged under a foot of standing water that is slowly draining out through area 10. The walls and 10-foot-high ceilings are earth braced with rotting support pillars.

7. EMERGENCY DEFENSE

Rusted weapons, shields, and armor are piled on the floor below racks that must have held the items before giving way to decomposition. A jumbled array of musty sacks, bottles, and chests balance on an unstable shelf.

The store of items was kept here for a final stand-off in defense of the city. There is little salvageable among the time-worn gear, but a successful Search check (DC 10) turns up two vials of alchemist's fire on the rickety shelf. PCs with the Alchemy skill can correctly identify the alchemist's fire with a successful Alchemy check (DC 15).

8. OPEN GRAVE

Three warped cracks in the ceiling of the room allow a steady stream of water to trickle in. The water showers the remains of three long-dead bodies huddled together in the center of the room. More bodies, perhaps a dozen, lie in a row next to them, nearly submerged in the standing water that covers the floor.

After the village sank, villagers who fled to this area were trapped and eventually suffocated. These bodies have decomposed naturally, since they have not remained in the protective soils of the swamp.

9. FOOD STORAGE (EL 4)

A collection of rotten crates and barrels are stacked against the far wall of this small square room. Mold covers the walls and floor, radiating out from a pile of canvas bags completely run through with the same slimy black mold.

This room was used to store emergency rations. In its day, the room boasted a three-month supply of food for the town, but it now holds only moldy grain bags and long rotted casks of dried goods. The current occupants are two dire opossums.

Creatures: The dire opossums hide among the crates and barrels waiting for food (like the PCs) to come within reach. A successful Spot check (opposed by the creatures' Hide check) reveals the gleaming reflection of the opossums' eyes.

➔ **Dire Opossums (2):** CR 2; Medium-size Animal (5 ft. long); HD 3d8+6; hp 20 each; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 13, flat-footed 12); Atk +5 melee (1d6+1 plus disease, bite); SA disease; SQ scent; AL N; Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +8, Move Silently +9, Listen +5. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA—Disease (Ex): Filth fever bite; Fortitude save (DC 12); incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 temporary Dexterity and 1d3 temporary Constitution.

10. WATER FLOW

Standing water gives way to thick, ankle-deep mud. Channels of water cut through the mud, collecting in a pool at the end of the hall. Many animal tracks run the length of the hallway.

The rotted door exits onto the embankment of a slough. Water flowing through the old city drains beneath the door to join the slough as it washes back toward the ocean.

The dire opossums in area 9 are responsible for the tracks. The door from the hallway into area 9 has been broken by the opossums and stands ajar.

11. BLOCKED CORRIDOR

This corridor has come to the same end as area 5 and is impassible.

12. EMERGENCY STORAGE

The smell of mold hangs decades old in this room. Rotten shelves hold all manner of emergency supplies. Blankets, clothing, torches, and lanterns ruined with age and water damage are covered in a sickly green mold.

The mold is an innocuous variety that releases a cloud of harmless green spores if disturbed.

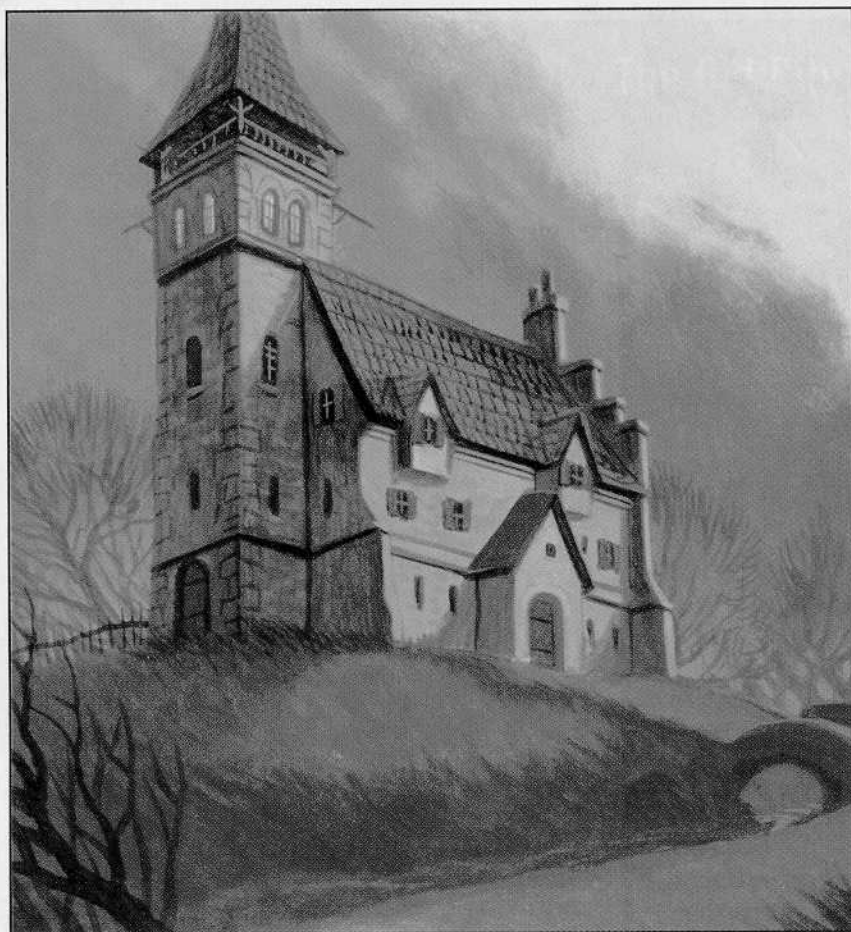
13. MOLDY GOODS (EL 2)

This area is identical to the other emergency storage closets (area 12) except that the warped door is stuck and the mold is dangerous.

❖ **Simple Wooden Door (stuck):** 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 13.

Trap: A 2-foot-diameter patch of brown mold has grown in this room. The temperature drops noticeably as PCs near the door. If the PCs are using a fire-based light source, the brown mold reacts quickly to the presence of heat, doubling in size when the door is opened. PCs within 5 feet of the door when it opens are exposed to the mold's heat absorption, taking 3d6 points of cold subdual damage. Cold damage instantly destroys the brown mold patch, regardless of how big it has grown.

➔ **Brown Mold:** CR 2; see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, page 116 for details on brown mold.



Refer to the rules for oil in the *Player's Handbook* (page 109) and the rules for catching on fire in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* (page 86).

BACK TO TOWN

If the PCs have not already dealt with the mummy, it travels to Bearden's Hollow in the evening two days after the first attack, heading straight for Eural Dunaman. It takes Sethellen 5 minutes to pound his way through the reinforced wooden doors of the main entrance to the village. After easily defeating the guards assigned to defend the village, the mummy attacks anyone he sees, eventually finding Dunaman and Gaith.

Once the PCs identify the mummy as Sethellen Isendale and hear Irewyn's tale of her husband's murder (not to mention the attempt on her life), they should be ready to face Dunaman.

14. OIL SUPPLY

Three-foot-tall barrels are stacked in a pyramid that nearly touches the ceiling. Written in bold letters on the barrels is the word "OIL." Water drips onto the barrels through a 5-foot-wide hole in the ceiling above. The masonry walls of this room are cracked and beginning to crumble.

Most of the barrels developed leaks, losing their contents long ago. Flooding has since washed the oil away. Three of the barrels, however, have withstood the elements and still hold oil. The library (area 6) can easily be reached by climbing the stack of barrels.

To ignite the oil (perhaps as a weapon against the mummy), the PCs must first open a barrel, since the waterlogged wood will not burn. Using a crowbar or striking a barrel (hardness 5, hp 10) to open it is a full-round action. If the PCs do not have a crowbar, they can find one in the chamber with a successful Search check (DC 10). To be effective, the oil must be poured on a receptive surface (floor, other barrels, mummy, and so forth) then ignited (both full-round actions). Pouring the oil on a moving target (like a mummy) from above requires a ranged touch attack.

UNMASKING THE VILLAINS (EL 3)

Dunaman is staying at the temple of St. Cuthbert, enjoying the protection of Constable Haiman Gaith and his mercenaries. If Sethellan is currently attacking the village, Father Denethan is busy tending any wounded. Otherwise, the cleric is sleeping but wakes if there is a commotion.

Eural Dunaman or Haiman Gaith deny and treat as hearsay any accusations directed at them unless incriminating evidence is lodged against them. Mentioning the black dragon armor worn by the mummy and presenting Irewyn is enough to frighten Dunaman and spur Gaith into action. While Gaith and his men attack, Dunaman waits for the proper opportunity to enter combat.

Creatures: A quiet man until now, Haiman Gaith loves to insult and taunt opponents. The mercenaries follow Gaith's lead, launching crude insults with their attacks.

♣ **Haiman Gaith, Male Human Ftr2:** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 18; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +5 melee (1d8+1/crit 19–20, masterwork longsword); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb -2*, Intimidate +2, Swim -4**, Move Silently +2, Spot +2. **Feats:** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Includes the breastplate's -4 armor check penalty.

**Includes the -7 penalty for the weight of Gaith's gear.

Possessions: *Potion of cure light wounds*, breastplate, masterwork longsword, dagger, 10 gp.

☛ **Eural Dunaman, Male Human Rog1/Ari1:** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 15 (includes Toughness feat); Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/crit 19-20, masterwork dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6; AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4; Will +4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5, Forgery +5, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5. **Feats:** Quick Draw, Toughness.

Possessions: *Potion of invisibility*, leather armor, masterwork dagger, 20 gp, three rings worth 300 gp, 100 gp and 50 gp respectively.

☛ **Mercenaries, Male Human War1 (3):** CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 7 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/crit 19-20, longsword); AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +1*, Intimidate +4 Swim -2**. **Feats:** Dodge, Power Attack.

*Includes the -4 armor check penalty for scale mail.

**Includes the -7 penalty for the weight of the mercenaries' gear.

Possessions: Scale mail, small wooden shield, longsword.

Tactics: Gaith and the mercenaries enter combat confidently, preferring one-on-one fights. They try to keep from being flanked at all costs.

Dunaman feigns feebleness (Bluff check, opposed by the PCs' Sense Motive check) and cowers if PCs attempt to engage him in combat. However, Dunaman draws his hidden dagger (using his Quick Draw feat) and attacks if he can flank an unwary PC.

Both Gaith and Dunaman attempt to flee if the fight turns against them. The mercenaries fight as long as Haiman Gaith remains in combat, fleeing or surrendering if Gaith leaves the fray.

Development: If the mummy is still at large at this point, it must be stopped or Sethellen destroys the city by morning. If either Gaith or Dunaman manage to flee from the PCs, and Sethellen is in the city, the mummy attempts to hunt down and slay them. If the mummy has already been defeated, Gaith and/or Dunaman return to the Isendale home to gather supplies before fleeing the city.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs turn or destroy Sethellen Isendale and expose Dunaman and Gaith as his murderers, the locals acknowledge them as heroes. The PCs are noted in the village history by Father Denethan and welcome anytime at the town's expense. If PCs bring Irewyn to the village, Father Denethan takes her in to oversee her slow recovery.

Other than their hospitality, the villagers cannot reward the PCs with much. They offer a masterwork large shield made from the scales of the black dragon Uernath, who was slain by Sethellen's grandfather. Furthermore, if any PCs have contracted mummy rot, the villagers will pay for a *remove disease* spell at the temple of St. Cuthbert to the south.

Grant the PCs an experience point award of 1,000 XP if they complete the following objectives: expose Dunaman and Gaith as murderers, return history resources from the old city to Father Denethan, bring Irewyn to Father Denethan, and send Sethellen Isendale to his eternal rest. A small award (100 XP) can also be granted to any character who offers to assist Father Denethan in the identification, blessing, and reburial of the bodies that washed up in the cranberry bogs.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Unfortunate as it might seem from the PCs' perspective, the escape of Haiman Gaith or Eural Dunaman can provide fuel for future adventures. Dunaman holds grudges. If the PCs thwart the perfect thing he had going in Bearden's Hollow, he's sure to turn up later should he survive. Gaith is a ruthless adversary, keeping track of the PCs' movements until the right moment to strike presents itself. Either villain would be perfect to add to a climactic scene in a later adventure, strolling in to blindside the PCs as they deal with another foe.

Both Irewyn and Father Denethan make excellent contacts for the PCs. It's entirely likely that should some other menace threaten Bearden's Hollow, one or the other of them might send for the PCs. Ω

Terry writes: "I am an artist currently living on the Long Beach peninsula (the northern tip of which is the geographical setting for "Bogged Down") in Washington state. When I'm not "working" on my newest campaign, I like to relax with some miniatures painting. Of course, my schedule is due to change with the impending birth of my first child any day now."

SLOTH

BY J. BRADLEY SCHELL

ARTWORK BY CARL CRITCHLOW • CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

| Magic Items 🐉 Monsters ⚔️ NPCs 🛡️ Objects 🏰 Settlements 🕸️ Traps

"Sloth" is a D&D Side Trek for four characters of 5th level. It can be modified for characters of 3rd to 7th level, as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure revolves around Andunna Freemidden and her slovenly ways. Despite her lazy approach to life, Andunna was, until recently, a modestly successful wizard in the town of Pellak, capital city of the March of Bissel in the Flanaess.

Andunna died recently when a poorly drawn magic circle of protection failed, freeing a creature she had just called with a scroll of *lesser planar binding*: a belker. To complete the adventure, the party needs to stop the belker before it leaves the general area of Andunna's former home, certain to wreak havoc on the surrounding countryside and the nearby city.

BACKGROUND

Andunna Freemidden lived in a rickety, unkempt, two-room hut on the hill overlooking Pellak to the north. A 5th-level conjurer, she was too involved in her magic to perform regular housekeeping, much less yard work. Her home has always been two steps away from condemnation as a health hazard.

Recently, Andunna undertook a task beyond her skills and paid a dire price. Two days ago, she traded three of her most powerful 3rd-level arcane spells (her only 3rd-level spells) to the apprentice of one of the most powerful wizards in town in exchange for a stolen scroll of *lesser planar binding*. She intended to summon an air elemental to do a little house cleaning—the audacity of such an act appealed greatly to her vanity (and her laziness). Unfortunately for Andunna, she wasn't ready to handle that kind of magic.

Andunna rushed home, and trying to contain her enthusiasm and excitement, hastily sketched a magic circle in the floor of her living room (which doubled as her workroom). Although she cast a personal *protection from evil* as part of preparing the magic circle, the ward proved ineffective thanks to an ironic twist of fate. In her excitement, Andunna never noticed the small wind gust from the unshuttered windows that blew a small piece of discarded string across the edge of the magic circle, breaking its continuity. When Andunna miscast the spell on the scroll, summoning an uncontrolled belker instead on an air elemental, it had no trouble leaving the summoning circle to exact revenge for being summoned.

The belker, Zz'aazzi (rhymes with "snazzy"), dispatched poor Andunna quickly. The terms of the *lesser planar binding* spell usually require the called creature to perform a service in exchange for its freedom. Since the belker doesn't have innate dimensional travel abilities, it's stuck on the Prime Material Plane. Only a *dismissal* or *banishment* spell is sufficient to send the belker home; killing it results in the belker's death, since *lesser planar binding* is a Conjururation (Calling) spell (see page 157 in the *Player's Handbook* for details). If left alone, Zz'aazzi returns to the Plane of Elemental Air in eight more days, but he doesn't know that.

As can be seen by the destruction of the hut and its contents, Zz'aazzi hasn't taken confinement well. Yet he is loath to depart from the general area of the hut for a few reasons. First, the belker is not particularly bright. He thinks that his summoning might be a wizard's trick, and he half expects someone to come out from beneath the woodwork yelling "Gotcha!" before sending him home. Secondly, Zz'aazzi is a homebody and a coward, despising new experiences and places as a whole lot of humbug. He's just not interested in exploring unfamiliar areas.

At the start of the adventure, Zz'aazzi has been trapped on this plane for two days. He's starting to get bored, having destroyed and thrown all of the furnishings out the windows and doors, decorated the walls with Andunna's entrails, and blown a hole in the wooden ceiling. If he's not stopped in the next 24 hours, he'll decide not to wait around any longer and descend into the city, wreaking havoc as he goes.

FOR THE PLAYERS

The adventure begins with the party walking or riding down the road near Andunna's home. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It's a lovely day for a roustabout. The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the trees and bushes in this gentle, civilized area are blowing with a soft, almost playful breeze. Suddenly, a heavy-set man wearing a spattered green tunic and mud-colored boots bursts out of the underbrush next to a well-traveled wagon track that leads from the roadway. He pants heavily as though exhausted and flaps his arms as if he were trying to fly.

"Wait, wait!" he cries, drawing nearer. "There's something horrible going on up at my neighbor's house! You gotta help!" He points up the wagon track to the top of a nearby tree-covered hill.

The party is near Andunna's drive (Andunna regularly used a cart she drove herself, pulled by a *mount* spell) when they meet her neighbor, Ferkle Witwillow, a farmer. He was out in the west pasture bringing in his oxen when he heard some commotion from Andunna's home (Zz'aazzi blowing a hole in the roof). He went up to the house to check on Andunna and was greeted by a barrage of smashed furniture and human entrails exploding from one of the windows. He rushed to the road to seek some help, frightened out of his wits. He tells the party everything he knows—very little—and offers to travel up the drive with them. He flees at the first sign of trouble. Ferkle has no particular skills related



to this problem and stays far away from Andunna's former abode.

☙ **Ferkle Witwillow, Male Human Com1:** CR —; Medium-size Humanoid (human) (5 ft. 3 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 6 (includes Toughness feat); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +0 melee (1d4/crit 19–20, dagger); AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Craft (woodworking) +4, Handle Animal +4, Profession (farmer) +4, Use Rope +4. **Feats:** Endurance, Toughness.

Possessions: dagger, pouch with 15 sp.

Andunna's Cabin



1. ANDUNNA'S YARD (EL 6)

The top of the hill is covered by a thick copse of trees. At the center of the copse sits a ramshackle cabin made of ill-fitting logs and a thick, slanted wooden roof. A 4-foot-diameter hole has been punched out of the north end of the peak. The windows are unshuttered, and the shredded remains of dirty curtains blow out from the cabin. The wooden front door is shut.

Debris from the hut has been tossed willy-nilly into the heavy weeds nearby. The detritus ranges in size from a tiny scrap to something that looks disturbingly like a severed human hand. Broken glass, ripped fabric, and shattered furniture lies in a 25-foot semicircle around the cabin. A broken wagon, its two axles snapped as if by hard driving, lies to the north of the cabin near the end of the track. A small stable located south of the house has long since collapsed in favor of an old elm tree now growing where one wall might have stood. You see no sign of livestock, or even small wildlife that might normally appear in the area.

It takes 5 minutes of searching to determine that there is nothing of value among the trash scattered in the yard. A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals that the wagon has been broken for a month or so, given its weathered appearance and the number of weeds around it. Until a few days ago, Andunna used her *unseen servant* spell to keep the wagon track clear, but she could not be bothered to fix the wagon.

If someone in the party succeeds at a Listen check (DC 10), he or she will hear a swooshing sound similar to that produced by a brisk breeze (Zz'aazzi moving around inside Andunna's hut), although no wind is evident in the yard or the trees.

The door to the cabin is protected by an *arcane*

lock spell cast by a 5th-level wizard. The door can be forced (DC 28), dispelled, knocked, or destroyed.

♦ **Wooden Door:** 1-1/2 in. thick, hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18 (currently 28 due to *arcane lock*).

Creature: If the party spends more than 5 minutes in the yard or makes an inordinate amount of noise, Zz'aazzi might hear them (Listen check, DC 15) and come out to attack. Zz'aazzi is still quite angry about being called to this plane and is not likely to listen to reason unless magically compelled to do so. Zz'aazzi emerges from the hole in the roof, catching most of the PCs flat-footed unless they are specifically watching the roof. See **Tactics** below for specific combat notes when Zz'aazzi attacks.

♦ **Zz'aazzi, Advanced Belker:** CR 6; Large Elemental (Air); HD 8d8+9; hp 46; Init +5 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 22 (touch 14, flat-footed 17); Atk +10 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings), +5 melee (1d4+1, bite), +5 melee (1d3+1, 2 claws); SA smoke claws; SQ smoke form, elemental qualities; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 21, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Spot +9. **Feats:** Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (wing).

Note: See page 26 of the *Monster Manual* for descriptions of belker special attacks and qualities. The save DC for the creature's smoke claws is 15.

Ad-hoc Experience: Award 15% more experience for defeating Zz'aazzi due to its advancement.

Zz'aazzi appears as a tall, pale-winged, demonlike creature composed almost entirely of smoke. His eyes glint a malevolent red, and his claws are covered with a thick, dark brown residue. He cackles in combat, even when in smoke form, sounding like far-off thunder on a sullen summer day.

Tactics: Zz'aazzi stays solid and engages a random character in melee combat, breaking off his attack only when he is wounded. Once hurt, Zz'aazzi's demeanor changes. He assumes smoke form and attempts to attack the most lightly armored character with his smoke claws. Note that in smoke form, Zz'aazzi is effectively under the effects of a *gaseous form* spell, making him difficult to wound.

Zz'aazzi redirects his attacks against any PC who successfully damages him in smoke form. When all of the "weaker" PCs and the opponents able to effectively damage the belker are slain or unconscious, Zz'aazzi resumes solid form to continue with more physical attacks against his remaining enemies.

Development: Slaying Zz'aazzi does not send him back to the Plane of Elemental Air. The belker knows this and avoids undue harm. Angry and frustrated at his current predicament, the belker attacks furiously and without remorse. In addition, any PCs who fall and are left behind are ripped to bits by the belker in a fit of rage.

Ridding Andunna's house of the belker eliminates any future threat of attacks that might occur over the next eight days. If he isn't defeated or returned to his home plane after another 24 hours, the emboldened Zz'aazzi leaves Andunna's cabin and heads for the

nearest occupied structure: Ferkle Witwillow's house. After slaying the Witwillow family, Zz'aazzi heads toward the nearby city.

2. ANDUNNA'S HOUSE

The cabin once held two rooms, but they have been gutted by a terrible force of nature, leaving only the shattered remnants of an interior wall about 1 foot high. The ceiling is defined by the roof, ranging from 8 to 15 feet high, and is black with soot and old dirt. A solid, fieldstone fireplace is built into the center of the north wall.

All of the normal contents of a home are missing, save only the thick, shredded curtains on the windows. A thick, brown, sausage-like tubing is strung along the undecorated walls at eye height, and an eviscerated, dismembered corpse lies crumpled in the northeast corner of the room. The air reeks of smoke, mildew, and fetid remains.

If he hasn't already encountered the party, Zz'aazzi (see area 1) is found here, churning about in the center of the room, trying to get up the courage to leave the cabin. He attacks as soon as the party enters the building.

A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals the scuffed and wind-swept remains of a magic circle in the center of the room. The circle holds no power. Andunna's corpse, now two days old, is a horror to behold. A *speak with dead* spell reveals the story of how Zz'aazzi came to be here.

Treasure: A hidden trapdoor in the southeast corner of the room leads to a small (5 foot by 5 foot) root cellar. A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals its presence. Inside the cellar is a single, *arcane locked* (5th level) wooden chest. The chest contains

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Sloth" is designed for 5th-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

1st- to 2nd-level PCs: A belker is probably too difficult a challenge for a low-level group. Consider using a small or Medium-size air elemental or a low CR evil outsider (such as an imp) as an alternative Zz'aazzi.

3rd- to 4th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but consider having the PCs arrive at Andunna's house just after she's slain to justify "wounding" Zz'aazzi (that is, starting the creature with lower than normal hit points).

6th- to 7th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written but with the following changes:

- Make Zz'aazzi a Huge, 10- or 11-HD belker. Note that this increases its Strength and Constitution, natural armor, saves, skills, feats, and alters its attacks and damage. Also, increasing the belker's Constitution increases the save DC of its smoke claws attacks, as does increasing its Hit Dice.

8th- to 9th-level PCs: Use the changes above for 6th- or 7th-level characters, but add another belker (assume that Andunna was higher level, called an advanced belker with a scroll of *planar binding* and called a second, normal belker with a scroll of *lesser planar binding* she made herself).

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure. Consult page 170 in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* (Tables 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

Andunna's two spellbooks with the following spells (Andunna's prohibited schools were Enchantment and Illusion):

0—arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic, ray of frost, resistance;

1st—mage armor, magic missile, mount, protection from evil, summon monster I, unseen servant;

2nd—arcane lock, knock, summon monster II, web;

3rd—flame arrow, summon monster III, fly.

In addition to the spellbooks, the chest holds four gems worth 25 gp, 50 gp, 100 gp, and 500 gp.

Finally, at the bottom of the chest, PCs can find two items Andunna crafted herself (each one took a year to make because she was so lazy): a *robe of anarchic conjuration** and *pearl of conjuring power* that allows its owner to recall one 1st-level Conjunction spell per day (see the sidebar below for details).

*This item relies on information found on page 198 in the *Manual of the Planes*. If you do not use the *Manual of the Planes* in your campaign, substitute any wondrous item of similar value for the robe.

CONCLUSION

If the party is unable to defeat Zz'aazzi, he rages through the poorer sections of the city at night, giving rise to a new legend of night-terror. After a few nights of these activities, Zz'aazzi attracts the attention of a powerful local spellcaster who dispels the belker and sends him home.

Andunna's house remains empty after the belker's departure. Andunna has no relatives in the area, and the neighboring farmers want nothing to do with the place, citing something about accursed places

under their breath. A possibility for future adventures could be that Andunna returns as a ghost or a haunt. Perhaps another evil creature such as a vampire or lycanthrope is drawn to the now shunned cabin, taking up residence within. Finally, the PCs could lay claim to the cabin, provided they seek out the proper authorities, post the necessary paperwork, and pay the required taxes and fees.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

If you're interested in continuing the adventure, consider these possibilities:

If Zz'aazzi is not vanquished in one form or another, it's possible a powerful spellcaster could learn of the rogue belker and enslave the creature for her own purposes. If these purposes involve the assassination of powerful people in the area, the belker would make an excellent tool for such goals. Any other future hook that involves bringing Zz'aazzi back to haunt the PCs (for failing to deal with the creature before) would be fun.

Alternatively, perhaps Zz'aazzi was already the minion of a more powerful elemental from the plane of air. This creature (perhaps a fiendish elder air elemental) isn't happy at all about one of its minions being kidnapped from home, and it is bound and determined to find whoever is responsible and make that person pay. When this being finds out Zz'aazzi was slain by the PCs, it could set its sights on taking revenge on the characters. Ω

Brad writes, "Sloth is, sadly, dedicated to my daughter Sophie's bedroom, which inspired this slovenly story."

CAPE OF ANARCHIC CONJURATION

This cape allows the wearer to summon anarchic creatures from the planes of chaos. Three times per day, when the wearer casts a *summon monster* spell, he can summon a creature with the anarchic template (see page 198 in the *Manual of the Planes*). The wearer must declare he is using the cape before casting the spell. If the summoning spell is countered or otherwise disrupted, that use of the cape is wasted. For example, if a 7th-level wizard casts *summon monster IV* to summon a magmin, he could instead summon an anarchic magmin.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster* (any), creator must be chaotic; **Market Price:** 3,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,500 gp + 120 XP; **Weight:** 1 lb.

PEARL OF CONJURING POWER

This item functions exactly like a normal *pearl of power*, except that it only allows its user to recall spells from the Conjunction school. To craft a *pearl of conjuring power*, one must be of sufficient level to cast the level of spell recalled by the item. For instance, a *pearl of conjuring power* that allows one to recall one 3rd-level spell per day requires a minimum 5th-level caster to create.

Caster Level: 1st–17th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item; creator must be able to cast spells of the spell level to be recalled; **Market Price:** 700 gp (1st), 2,800 gp (2nd), 6,300 gp (3rd), 11,200 gp (4th), 17,500 (5th), 25,200 (6th), 34,300 (7th), 44,800 (8th), 56,700 (9th), or 49,000 (two spells); **Weight:** —.

CRITICAL THREATS

BY MATTHEW SERNETT
ARTWORK BY JASON A. ENGLE



GNARLCROWN

6th-level Ghost Treant Druid: CR 16; Huge Undead (30 ft. tall); HD 13d12; hp 84; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. fly (perfect); AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 13) ethereal or 21 (touch 8, flat-footed 21) manifested; Atk +7 melee (1d4, 2 incorporeal touches) or +16 melee (2d6+9+1d4, 2 slams); SA manifestation, corrupting touch, frightful moan, corrupting gaze, animate trees, trample (1d4—ethereal—or 2d12+5+1d4—manifested, Reflex save, DC 20, for half), double damage against objects; SQ incorporeal, rejuvenation, turn resistance +4, undead, fire vulnerability, half damage from piercing, nature sense, resist nature's lure, wild shape (2/day); AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 29, Dex 10, Con —, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 20.

Skills: Concentration +9, Bluff +9, Hide -8*, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +11, Sense Motive +9, Spot +15, Wilderness Lore +14. **Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Track.

*Treants have a +16 racial bonus to Hide checks in forested areas.

Spells Prepared (5/4/4/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*create water* ×5; 1st—*entangle* ×3, *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*charm person or animal*, *chill metal*, *soften earth and stone*, *summon swarm*; 3rd—*spike growth* ×2.

For centuries, Gnarlcrown ruled the forest of Thorn Hollow. Then one spring, two-legged creatures came, calling themselves elves. They made peace with Gnarlcrown, and Gnarlcrown allowed them to remain. In return, they taught him the magic of the land. With their influence, Tangle Hollow gained a measure of peace and balance it had never known.

Then one spring, the elves left, and new animals came to Gnarlcrown's kingdom: humans. Not knowing what to expect,

Gnarlcrown went to look at these humans. Game trails the width of rivers crisscrossed his land, great clearings made the forest patchy like a disease, and men carved homes from the corpses of Gnarlcrown's children.

Dumbfounded, Gnarlcrown approached the first humans he found. Terrified, the woodsmen attacked as best they could. Gnarlcrown reacted in kind, seeing the truth of the humans: They were a menace to Gnarlcrown's kingdom. He destroyed them, pulping their fleshy bodies beneath his roots and breaking their limbs with his powerful grip.

The war continued until a human druid approached Gnarlcrown with a message of peace. Gnarlcrown rejected the druid's offer and his plans for peace. The druid left and returned later with word that the humans had gone. Foolishly, Gnarlcrown believed him. Invited by the druid to investigate, Gnarlcrown journeyed to the seemingly empty village. When Gnarlcrown reached the center of town, the druid and other humans attacked. Confronted with fire and deceit, Gnarlcrown died.

APPEARANCE

Gnarlcrown looks like a tree in winter, its highest limbs a tangled mass of crooked, twisted branches. The cracked and craggy surface of Gnarlcrown is not bark, but the charred remains of his skin. His grimacing face, twisted into a visage of fury, looks out from the crux of two great branches that serve as his arms.

TACTICS

Betrayed by a druid, Gnarlcrown is enraged by their presence and will not trust a party that associates with one. An elf has the best chance of talking with Gnarlcrown and discovering his tale.

Gnarlcrown just recently returned from death and has not yet overcome his fear of fire and humans, keeping *create water* spells prepared and unwilling to face large conflagrations. He ambushes individuals and small parties in the woods, animating dead trees and using his frightful moan—which sounds like the wind whistling through treetops—to panic and scatter his foes.

Against more able opponents, Gnarlcrown wildshapes into the form of a small forest animal before hiding, manifesting, and using his frightful moan, hoping to divide the party. When he can, he shows himself to an individual to use his corrupting gaze. When this tactic has yielded its best results, he transforms to normal form and tramples as many opponents as he can.

DEVELOPMENT

The PCs might encounter Gnarlcrown while passing through Thorn Hollow. It's likely they hear his whistling moan before they see him, although if elves dominate the group, Gnarlcrown might approach openly. It's likely the treant would ask for help from these elves in driving off the humans of Thornburg. The ghost can only find rest if the forest is returned to the glory it knew before the humans arrived.

Conversely, the PCs might be hired by the elders of Thornburg to find out why the forest has become so dangerous and to get rid of the threat. PCs with the ability to talk to the forest's denizens might learn the truth of Gnarlcrown's story, possibly leading them to attempt to drive off the citizens of Thornburg. Ω

THE LEGEND OF GARTHULGA

BY TIM HITCHCOCK

ARTWORK BY RON SPENCER • CARTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG ZIPSE

| Magic Items 🐉 Monsters ⚔️ NPCs 📖 Objects 🏰 Settlements 🕸️ Traps

"The Legend of Garthulga" is a short D&D adventure suitable for a party of four 1st-level characters. However, it can be easily scaled for higher-level PCs as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

BACKGROUND

On the edge of the Gnarley Forest facing the Selintan River is a modest trading post and inn run by Barcus Thigwhistle. Barcus, a good-natured but slow-witted gnome, thrives on the bustling trade between the cities of Greyhawk, Dyvers, and Verbobonc, as well as the local elves of the forest. He has always managed to make a nice living for himself as a trader of goods, and by occasionally putting up weary travelers for the night—until recently. An ancient elven children's tale states that once every hundred years, a fearsome monster known as Garthulga rises from the dead and ravages the forest and surrounding lands until it is satiated. Unfortunately for poor Barcus, the legend appears true. A creature loosely fitting the description of the legendary monster has appeared and begun terrorizing Barcus's waystation.

The truth is that the fearsome Garthulga is actually Barcus's beloved pet "pig," Tibby. Tibby is a young dire boar that the gnome raised from birth. Not familiar with dire animals, Barcus simply believes Tibby is an extraordinarily large pig. A threesome of halfling rogues collectively known as the Brulligum Brothers (Theeter, Paldi, and Cass) heard about the legend and used it to concoct a scheme to extort money from Barcus. They stole Tibby, disguised her as Garthulga, and used her to scare away all of his customers. Afterward, they offered to rid him of the monster in exchange for 1,000 gold pieces.

Unfortunately, the halflings frightened away too many of Barcus's customers, leaving him almost bankrupt. The most he can offer anyone at this point is free room and board; anything more would cost him his business. With those facts in mind, Barcus has decided that he might as well wait out Garthulga's reign of terror, which consists mostly of horrid squealing and pawing in the middle of the night.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure should take place when PCs are first starting out and wish to purchase equipment. After hearing about the fantastic variety of items at Barcus's Trader Inn, as well as its convenient proximity to excellent orc-bashing areas (near the forest), it seems an ideal place for adventurers to visit. When they arrive, the Trader Inn looks more like a ghost town. As Barcus explains his situation to the PCs, he is interrupted by the Brulligum Brothers. After an encounter with the halfling gang, Barcus tries to convince the PCs to stay the night. That evening, the Garthulga appears, leaving clues and a trail for the PCs to follow. The trail leads into a briar patch which serves as the halflings' hideout and the den where they are keeping Tibby. At that point, the PCs have to fight and capture the halflings and either bring them to justice or cut a deal with the outlaws.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Although financially destitute, Barcus will provide the PCs with free room and board for a year (which is a pretty good deal for low-level PCs) if they help him with his current conundrum. The PCs can also be spurred into action by the Brulligum Brothers' obnox-

ious behavior. You might also want to use minor hooks that include wanting to help Barcus because it would be the right thing to do, as well as a desire to uncover more information about the mysterious, legendary, and fierce Garthulga. If one or more of the PCs are locals, especially elves, then this last hook is particularly effective (since the characters would remember the legend of Garthulga from their childhoods). Besides, defeating a legend brings fame and fortune!

INSTRUCTIONS

Some of the area descriptions are different depending on the time of day. As the DM, you need to keep track of the time of day. Also, some of the area descriptions hinge on prerequisite actions, which means that unless a specific action has occurred first, part of the description can be omitted. Read-aloud text can be read directly to players or paraphrased. PCs should arrive at Barcus's Trader Inn around supper time, just before sunset.

1. BARCUS'S TRADER INN

When the PCs arrive at Barcus's Traders Inn, read or paraphrase the following:

Nestled against the forest's edge is a two story, red cedar cabin with a large porch. A wooden sign board hanging on thick hemp ropes swings lazily over the porch steps. It reads "BARCUS'S TRADER INN" in carved capital letters. Oddly enough, the trading post looks deserted, a far cry from the wonderful descriptions you heard about the establishment. You had hoped to swap some equipment or even pick up some hard-to-find items. On the shiny side of the coin, you're pretty sure there are rooms available for the night.

The cabin and all of its furniture is made out of cedar, including several tables and chairs for smaller folks. All ceilings in the cabin are 10 feet high; there is no attic, so the ceilings of the upstairs rooms angle toward the peaked roof. The building's cedar doors measure 3 feet wide, 8 feet tall, and a little over 1



inch thick. All the windows are 2 feet wide by 3 feet tall but are only 20 inches off the floor so Barcus can reach them.

◆ **Cedar Door:** Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 15.

1A. MAIN ROOM

The main room of the inn is huge. On the south wall are two doors. A large wooden staircase leading upstairs stands against the north wall. Beneath the stairs sits a half cord of rough-cut, dried lumber and a wheelbarrow. Two large fireplaces are set into the west wall. The remaining exterior walls are covered with display racks, cases, and tables with glass tops. Skins and furs hang in various places from every rafter. In the center of the room stand several tables and chairs, a couple stacks of crates and barrels, and a pile of rolled up rugs. The floor looks

worn and well trafficked, although presently only one person occupies the room. This diminutive figure sits on a small stool jabbing at some coals with a poker. A rather portly gnome, he turns slowly to acknowledge you, wiping either sweat or tears from his face. Suddenly his mood seems to change and a broad smile crosses his face. "Welcome, friends! Welcome!" he exclaims, as he crosses the room to greet you.

The gnome introduces himself as Barcus Thigh-whistle before bidding the PCs to take a seat. He offers them a free round of drinks if they agree to listen to his "business proposition." If the PCs agree to hear Barcus's story, read or paraphrase the following boxed text. If the PCs aren't interested in his tale of woe, skip to the following box.

"Friends, I'll get straight to the point. I am in desperate need of help. There is an ancient legend around these parts that every hundred years or so, a horrible, evil undead beast known as Garthulga rises from some unknown place and terrorizes the region with chaos and destruction before returning to the dark place from whence it came. Now, I've always believed these tales to be nothing but hogwash, but apparently they are true. I have been plagued by such a beast for the past several weeks. It comes every night and makes horrible noises, and I fear the foul thing has even devoured my pet pig and stalwart companion, Tibby."

To make matters worse, my inn, once a resounding success, is about to go bankrupt. I can't keep a single customer! Even my best suppliers won't come to deliver new stores, and I'm running quite low on funds, gear, and food."

I can't pay you for your help, but if you can help me by ridding the land of the foul Garthulga, I'll give you free room and board for an entire year. Can you please help me?"

Give the PCs a chance to respond. However, not long after Barcus makes his offer, three halflings known as the Brulligum Brothers (see area 3D for complete descriptions) burst in and interrupt Barcus. Read or paraphrase the following:

The front door swings open, and three halflings in leather armor and riding cloaks stride in. Noticing you, the largest halfling immediately shoots an angry glare at Barcus while the other two give you dirty looks. "Come now Barcus, what's this? I thought you'd agreed to pay us good gold to rid you of Garthulga. Looking for lower bidders?"

Ignoring the halfling and sweating nervously, Barcus asks you again, "Please, will you help me?"

The largest halfling points a finger at each of you. "This ain't yer business outsiders. Me and the innkeeper here, we had a deal. I'm warnin' you: Learn yer place around here, or else!"

"Come on, Cass," says one of the other halflings. "We gots other business to get to."

"Yeah," pipes in the third halfling, and then to Barcus he remarks snidely, "We'll be back when ya wants to git rid o' that critter, belly boy."

The biggest halfling turns for the door, then looks at you and says, "Remember, you ain't from around these parts, so don't put yer nose where it don't belong." With that, the halflings rush out the door, slamming it behind them.

A successful Sense Motive check opposed by Cass's Bluff check reveals that the halflings have more knowledge of the legend of Garthulga than they're letting on. Immediately after the halflings leave, Barcus says, "Don't mind them Brulligum Brothers. They're just a bunch o' no-goodnicks anyhow. Besides, I think they've stolen a few of my chickens."

Barcus is visibly shaken and offers to put the PCs up for free because he is scared and needs the protection. If the PCs ask about the halflings, he tells them that the Brulligums have been trying to get him to pay 1,000 gold pieces to get rid of Garthulga. Barcus adds that even though the Brulligum Brothers are notorious hoodlums, he would have paid them if he had the money. He even offered to put them up for a year—albeit against his better judgment—but they turned him down flat, demanding money or nothing. (Barcus is telling the truth.)

If the PCs try to follow the Brulligum Brothers, they see them head south on riding dogs, traveling quickly along the forest's edge. They can be tracked (Wilderness Lore, DC 15) for two miles until they reach the bank of a small stream, a tributary of the Selintan River. At this point, tracking the halflings becomes more difficult (Wilderness Lore, DC 25). The Brulligums ride into the stream and follow it for a few miles, deep into the forest. Then they double back through the woods until they reach their hideout in the briar patch.

Finally, if the PCs ask about making purchases, Barcus tells them he nothing to sell except food and a few essentials (feel free to pick some common items from the *Player's Handbook*). He tells the PCs that if business picks up again, though, he'll be grateful for their business.

Creature: Barcus is almost 200 years old. A bit scatterbrained, he enjoys dabbling in everything but get sidetracked too easily to have picked up a spe-

cific skill set with any proficiency. He is pleasant and well-mannered but becomes flustered quickly. This often makes him appear nervous. When pressured or threatened, he tries to ignore it (usually by changing the subject) in hopes that it simply goes away.

Barcus has dark woody skin that is slightly wrinkled, and greyish-blue eyes with deep crow's feet earned from years of laughing. What's left of his hair is gray and wispy. He has neatly trimmed sideburns but no other facial hair. Barcus is also a bit on the heavy side, and he enjoys sampling the various exotic foods that pass through his shop. He favors wearing greens, reds, and purples in intricate patterns and is rarely seen without wearing a very elaborately woven gold vest that has fifty of pockets in it. If asked about it, he will delight in showing off all fifty pockets, but he can't remember who he traded to get it.

Barcus, Male Gnome Exp2: CR 1/2; Small Humanoid (gnome); HD 2d6+2; hp 9; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 11); Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, club); SQ gnome traits, speak with animals, spell-like abilities; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +2. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (club).

1B. KITCHEN

This room contains a cabinet with jars of dried beans and spices. The bottom shelves hold a half-dozen heavy bags of wheat, rice, barley, and other grains. A large black shepherd's stove, which has a vent pipe leading out of the exterior wall, sits against one wall.

Hanging from racks on the ceiling are iron pots, pans, and cooking utensils. Two 50-gallon water barrels sit in the corner near a large granite basin. There are also some 25-gallon wine casks and 10-gallon kegs stacked against the north wall.

Two of the wine casks contain cheap red wine, and one contains a bitter white. One of the kegs has a dark beer in it, two have a light beer, another holds sweet ale, and the fifth contains honey mead.

Treasure: A reinforced oak case holding six bottles of brandy (55 gp each) and six bottles of whisky (25 gp each) is hidden behind the kegs of beer.

1C. BARCUS'S ROOM

This 30-foot by 20-foot room has a bed, bench, chair, and a wardrobe. Near the window is a cedar workbench with several small tools lying on it.

Treasure: On the bench is a set of gemcutter's tools worth 100 gp. The set includes eight files, twelve chisels, a pair of pliers, a small rock hammer, and a magnifying glass.

In addition, under the bed and beneath the floorboards lies an unlocked iron strongbox. It can be found with a successful Search check (DC 16). It contains 50 sp and two agates worth 25 gp each. This strongbox contains all of Barcus's savings.

1D. UPSTAIRS

Upstairs are six bedrooms. Two of them are 20-foot by 20-foot doubles, while the rest are 20-foot by 30-

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Legend of Garthulga" is designed for 1st-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

2nd- to 3rd-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following changes:

- A fully grown dire boar is no longer too much to handle for parties of this level, so there's no reason not to introduce a grown-up Tibby in the adventure. In addition, add a level to each of the Brulligum brothers.

4th- to 5th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written but with the following changes:

- Add a level to Barcus and provide him with the ability to possibly trade in magic goods as an extra incentive for the PCs to take up his cause.
- Make Tibby a fully grown, 8- or 9-HD dire boar.
- Make the Brulligum brothers each equal to the PCs' party level (so a 5th-level group would face three 5th-level Brulligum brothers).

- Finally, add another trap or two of higher CR to the bramble patch.

6th- to 7th-level PCs: Run the adventure with the changes described above, and implement the following additional alterations:

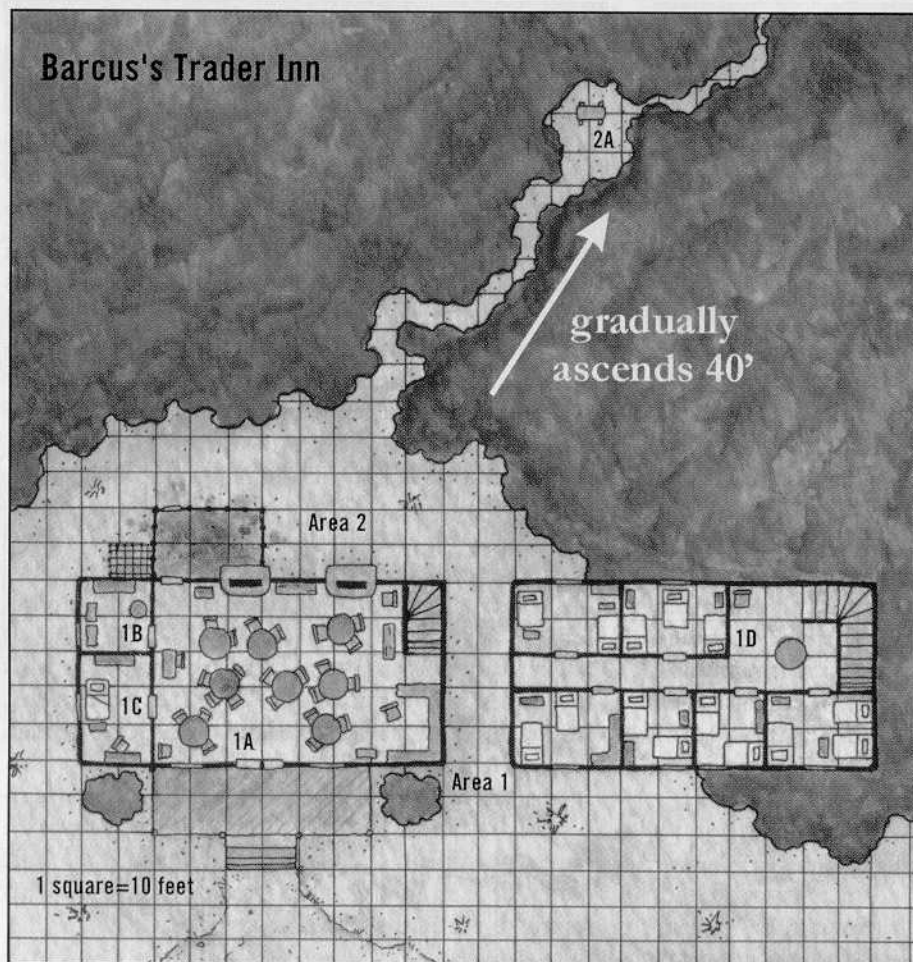
- Give Barcus several more levels. Make Tibby an 11-HD dire boar.

- Make the Brulligum brothers equal to the PCs party level, and add a fourth Brulligum brother, Rowlf, who is a barbarian. Consider giving the brothers more Ride-related feats, and allow them to use their mounts in combat against the PCs.

- Make the traps more challenging in the bramble patch.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure. Consult page 170 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* (Tables 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

Barcus's Trader Inn



foot triples. Each room is furnished with cedar beds and foot lockers, a night table with a candle, and one window. Beneath each bed is an empty brass bedpan.

AWAKENED IN THE NIGHT (EL 3)

No matter where PCs decide to spend the night, after they turn in read or paraphrase the following:

You are awakened by a horrible squealing noise. It sounds like it is coming from outside.

If the characters go outside to investigate, read or paraphrase the following:

Atop a small hill behind the cabin, you see a four-legged beast covered in spikes and lit by purplish flames. Its huge head is skeletal with dark, sunken eye sockets. It paces in circles around the hill, then disappears. Barcus runs onto the porch in his night-shirt and bare feet. Clutching a dripping candle and shaking with fright, he stammers, "See? I told you! It's Garthulga. Why won't it leave me be?"

Creature: Garthulga is actually Tibby, Barcus's juvenile pet dire boar in disguise. The Brulligums

have wrapped her in spiky leather barding, tied dead branches and other woodland detritus to her, and painted her face with dirt and grease to look like a skull. Paldi also uses his ghost sound cantrip to make her squeal more fearsome.

➤ Tibby, Young Dire

Boar: CR 3; Large Animal; HD 5d8+15; hp 31; Init +0; Spd 40 ft. (30 ft. with barding); AC 18 (touch 9, flat-footed 18); Atk +7 melee (1d8+5, slam or bite); SA Ferocity; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Even under normal circumstances, Tibby looks frightening. She has feral features, bony plates and knobs sprout from her face and grow along her spine, she weighs close to 1,300 pounds, and she is just over 9 feet long. The only signs of her domesti-

cation are her soft brown eyes and the gentle, basso rumbling grunts she makes when scratched behind her ears.

The halflings have wrapped Tibby's body in spiked black leather barding and tucked dead tree limbs into the straps. The spikes rise from 3–12 inches along her sides and back, making her look like a cross between a very fat howler and a demonic porcupine. Tibby is sweet-tempered and harmless around Barcus because he raised her, but around anyone else she's easily agitated and does not hesitate to attack if she feels threatened.

2. BEHIND THE CABIN

A footpath leads to a clearing atop the hill behind the inn. At the bottom of the hill near the inn is an empty pig pen. The trough has some old slop in it.

The clearing atop the hill is overgrown with heather and lilac. A short stone bench faces an incredible view of the Selintan River. The clearing is cozily surrounded by cedar trees.

The pigpen was Tibby's home when she still lived with Barcus.

2A. HILLTOP

The tracks of some large beast are clearly visible in the downtrodden grass, and a clear trail leads off into the woods to the northeast.

Characters who successfully Search the hilltop (DC 15) find a half-chewed truffle on the ground. There are also cloven hoofprints everywhere. The prints can be easily followed to area 3A.

3. THE BRIAR PATCH

This area is overrun by a huge, ancient briar patch. The tangle is 6 feet tall in places, the average branch is an inch thick, and some thorns are 4 inches long. The briars can be hacked apart with a slashing weapon at the rate of 5 feet per round, and the briars are flammable (see area 3C for details). Anyone hiding in the brambles gains three-quarters cover.

3A. THE TRUFFLE TRAIL

The hoofprints lead deeper into the forest. PCs who succeed at a Wilderness Lore check (DC 14) notice that they are actually following a disguised trail.

3B. PATCH ENTRANCE (EL 1+)

A few hundred yards inside the forest is a large briar patch. A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals truffle pieces scattered around the perimeter of the briar patch. The PCs can follow a tiny pathway (created by the halflings) that leads into the briar patch with a successful Search or Wilderness Lore check (DC 13).

Over the pathway, the canopy of briars forms an arched tunnel, and anyone over 4 feet tall must stoop to enter. The passage is only 3 feet wide, so PCs who enter must walk in single file. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 12) reveals that the pathway is frequently trimmed. Anyone who attempts to cut the briars makes sufficient noise to automatically warn Theeter (see **Creature** below).

Creature: Theeter Brulligum lurks in the pathway and watches for intruders. See area 3D for Theeter's statistics.

Tactics: Approaching Theeter undetected requires a successful Hide and Move Silently check (opposed by the halflings' Spot and Listen check, respectively). If he detects one or more intruders, Theeter rushes back to area 3D to warn his brothers.

If the PCs surprise Theeter, they can attack or subdue him without alerting the other two brothers. If the PCs attempt to talk to Theeter, he pretends to agree with whatever they say while backing slowly toward area 3D. He readies an action to bolt down the short passage to the camp, hollering for his brothers as a free action as he flees.

If Theeter warns his brother, or if Cass and Paldi hear sounds of combat, Paldi points Tibby in the direction of the advancing PCs and goads her into an angry panic, causing her to charge at full speed down the tunnel. Read or paraphrase the following description at that time:

You see a huge black mass of spikes stampeding toward you. As it nears you it raises its huge, fleshless head and lets out a bloodcurdling squeal!

Tactics: Tibby attacks for 2 rounds or until she is struck before fleeing at top speed into the woods.

Once Tibby passes the PCs, she continues without stopping until she reaches her wallow behind the cabin. If the PCs try to stop or interfere with Tibby during her confused state, she attacks viciously.

Development: PCs who succeed at a Spot check (DC 14) determine that "Garthulga" is actually a large boar covered in a crude disguise.

3C. OIL TROUBLE (EL 1)

This 10-foot section of tunnel is soaked with oil.

Trap: Cass Brulligum waits until at least two PCs have entered the area before tossing a lit torch into the corridor. This ignites the entire area in 1 round. Anyone in the passageway must make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid catching on fire. PCs who catch on fire take 1d6 points of damage. In each round following, they must make another Reflex save or take another 1d6 points of damage (see page 86 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* for rules about catching on fire).

The oil-soaked area burns for 3 rounds or until extinguished. If the area is allowed to burn freely, the briars nearby catch fire. The fire spreads rapidly through the entire patch at the rate of 10 feet per round in an even spread from the point of origin. Any 10-foot section on fire burns for 3 rounds and then dies out. Luckily, the dried briars burn quickly, so the fire does not spread beyond the patch.

↗ **Oil Trap:** CR 1; no attack roll necessary (1d6); Reflex save (DC 15) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20). *Note:* Failing the save results in the character catching on fire.

3D. HALFLING HIDEOUT (EL 2 or 3)

An open area in the center of the briar patch holds a small camp. The briars overhead have been removed as well, allowing smoke from a cooking fire to escape.

A small leather tent is pitched to one side, and a few small animal bones lie scattered about on the ground near the fire. In one corner is a small cask

with a half-eaten loaf of hard, crusty-looking bread sitting on it. Hanging up in the briars is a roasted wild turkey. Next to the cask rests a sack.

You arrive just in time to see the small forms of the Brulligum Brothers darting down different passages leading out of the camp.

Creatures: The halflings attempt to escape, not hesitating to injure PCs in the process if necessary. Each brother takes a different path toward their riding dogs: Cass takes tunnel A, Theeter takes Tunnel B, and Paldi takes Tunnel C (it leads to the pit trap, but he knows where it is and climbs around it). Once they reach their dogs, they hop on and bolt. If the PCs catch up with them, the halflings turn to face their pursuers.

If a brother falls, the survivors attempt to rendezvous a few days later in a small tavern just outside of Dyvers.

☛ **Theeter Brulligum, Male Halfling Rogr:** CR 1; Small Humanoid (halfling) (3 ft. tall); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/crit 19–20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/crit 19–20, light crossbow); SA sneak

attack +1d6; SQ halfling traits; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Bluff +4, Climb +3, Hide +11*, Jump +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Pick Pockets +7, Ride +5, Spot +4, Tumble +7. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (short sword).

*Includes +4 size bonus.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, short sword, light crossbow with 20 bolts, pouch with 4 gp and 15 sp, *potion of spider climb*.

Theeter is the youngest of the brothers. Theeter is of average height and weight for a halfling. He has short black hair and a stubble on his cheeks (his older brothers tease him about not having full sideburns yet). He has ruddy skin and black eyes.

Tactics: If Theeter wants to escape and can't reach his riding dog, he tries to get out of sight before hiding. He then consumes his *potion of spider climb* and tries to make for the trees. If caught, he doesn't hesitate to give up his brothers if he thinks it means his freedom. He won't reveal the location of their rendezvous unless *charmed*. If simply pressed for the information, he lies about the location; PCs can try to detect the lie with a

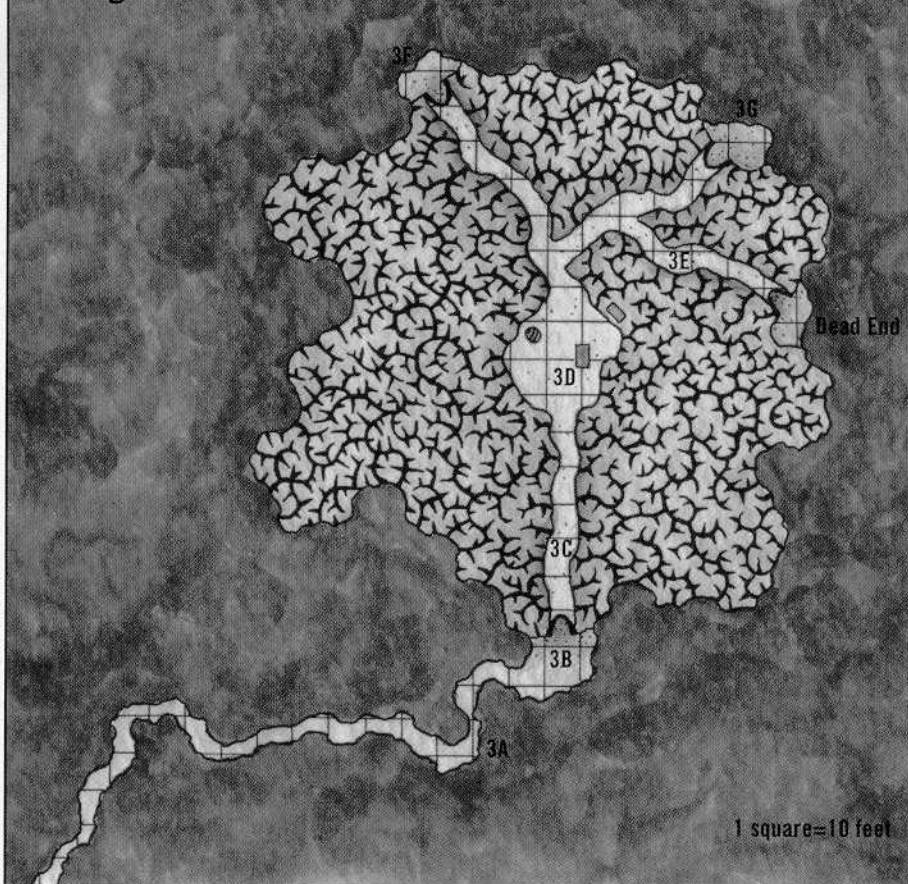
Sense Motive check (opposed by Theeter's Bluff check).

In combat, Theeter tries to flank targets with Paldi, since Cass usually hangs back to cast spells before engaging in melee.

☛ **Paldi Brulligum, Male Halfling Rgr:** CR 1; Small Humanoid (halfling) (3 ft. tall); HD 1d10+1; hp 11; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 13, flat-footed 13); Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/crit 19–20, masterwork short sword), +0 melee (1d4+1/crit 19–20, dagger); or +3 ranged (1d8/crit 19–20, light crossbow); SA favored enemy (aberrations); SQ halfling traits; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 11.

Skills: Animal Empathy +4, Climb +9, Handle Animal +4, Hide +6*, Jump +5, Listen +1, Move Silently +5, Ride +6, Wilderness Lore +3. **Feats:** Dodge.

Brulligum Brothers' Hideout



*Includes +4 size bonus.

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork short sword, dagger, light crossbow with 10 bolts, pouch with 20 sp.

Paldi is sarcastic and loves trying to outrage foes. He is independent and has split from the group more than once; only his distrust and prejudice toward big people has brought him back to the family fold.

Paldi is of average height and weight for a halfling. He has brown eyes and keeps his shoulder-length black hair tightly braided and pulled back in a ponytail. He wears his sideburns long, and out of habit, he usually twists the ends into little spikes.

Tactics: If captured, Paldi offers to rat out his brothers to gain his own freedom. He might even swear his allegiance to the PCs for a while, although they quickly discover this allegiance means nothing to him, and he attempts to split as soon as he feels he is no longer benefiting from the situation.

In combat, Paldi coordinates his attacks with Theeter. He attacks one opponent at a time, designating the most fearsome melee foe as the target of his Dodge feat.

♣ **Cass Brulligum, Male Halfling Brdr:** CR 1; Small Humanoid (halfling) (3 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 1d6+1; hp 10 (includes Toughness feat); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +1 ranged (1d2 subdual, masterwork whip) or +0 melee (1d6/crit 19–20, short sword); SA bardic music, spells; SQ halfling traits; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 15.

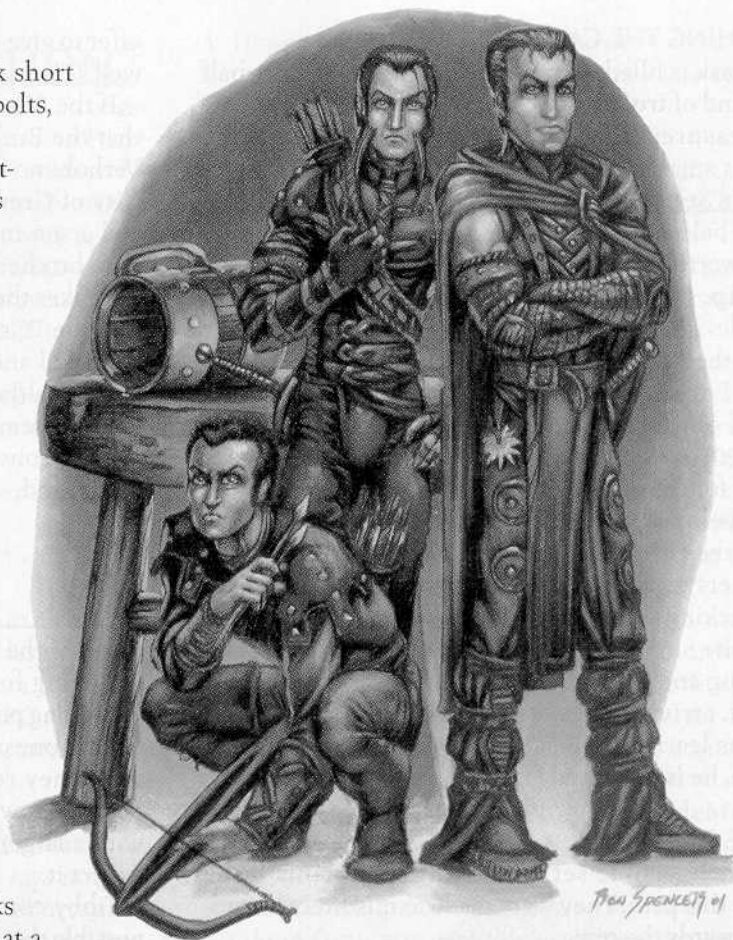
Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +2, Hide +11*, Intimidate +6, Jump +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Perform +6 (ballad, drum, whistle, storytelling), Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +6. **Feats:** Toughness.

*Includes +4 size bonus.

Spells Known (3; base save DC = 12 + spell level): 0—ghost sound, light, prestidigitation, read magic.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, masterwork whip, short sword, caltrops, a pouch with 25 gp, wand of expeditious retreat (15 charges), potion of gaseous form.

Cass is arrogant, bossy, and scheming. For all his bad traits, Cass isn't truly malicious, and although he thrives on his infamy, he wants to be remembered for his cleverness more than anything else.



Cass is big for a halfling. He has brown eyes and very neatly cropped black hair and sideburns. He also has a fairly prominent, inch-long scar bisecting the outer ridge of his right eyebrow.

Tactics: Cass always tries to talk his way out of a conflict. He usually starts with an Intimidate check, since he feels that being the bully gives him more control of a situation. If that fails, he doesn't hesitate to resort to lies. One of his favorites is, "My other brothers will be here any minute. You'll scam if you don't want to end up with broken knees." He'll use this even if his other brothers are present, trying to make opponents believe the Brulligum gang is bigger than it is.

In a fight, Cass begins singing immediately, using his bardic music to inspire courage in his brothers and himself by whistling a martial diddy or telling tales of the Brulligum Brothers bashing opponents, taking their money, and spending it on women and games of chance. He tries to attack with his whip first, targeting lightly armored characters who hang back from melee. If he successfully trips such a character, his brothers move to attack that person. He saves his wand and potion for hasty escapes.

SEARCHING THE CAMP (EL 2)

The cask is filled with cheap mead. The sack has half a pound of truffles in it.

Treasure: Pushed into the briar patch behind the tent is small stone box, which be found with a successful Search check (DC 12). The box is trapped (see **Trap** below). The box contains 85 gp, 35 sp, a jade ring worth 50 gp, and an onyx worth 120 gp.

Trap: The stone box is rigged with a poison needle. The trap must be successfully disarmed to open the box safely.

➤ **Poison Needle:** CR 2; +8 ranged (1 plus greenblood oil poison); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20). *Note:* See page 80 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* for the effects of greenblood oil poison.

Development: Killing or driving off the brothers ends the threat of Garthulga. Surviving Brulligum Brothers regroup and set off for "softer lands" where the pickings are easier to come by.

If she survives, Tibby loses most of her spiked barding and "adornments" in the flight through the forest, arriving back at Barcus's Trader Inn. When Barcus learns that his pet and friend has returned home, he is delighted and promptly bathes her.

3E. THE PIT (EL 1)

A clearly visible set of halfling bootprints leads down this path. They were made to misdirect intruders towards the trap.

Trap: A natural pit in the trail here was enlarged, deepened, and lined with spikes by the brothers, then covered with brambles and dry branches to conceal its presence.

➤ **Spiked Pit (10 feet deep):** CR 1; no attack roll necessary (1d6 subdual), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+1 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

3F. ESCAPE #1 (EL 1)

Creature: Cass has left his riding dog here for an easy escape.

➤ **Riding Dog:** hp 13; *Monster Manual* 196.

3G. ESCAPE #2 (EL 2)

Creatures: Paldi and Theeter have left their riding dogs here for an easy escape.

➤ **Riding Dog:** hp 13; *Monster Manual* 196.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs subdue and capture the Brulligum Brothers, the halflings attempt to buy their way to freedom, offering 200 gp and promising never to trouble Barcus or the PCs again. If threatened further, they

offer to give the PCs their wand of *expeditious retreat* as well. (Cass is resistant to this at first.)

If the PCs bring the halflings to justice, they learn that the Brulligums are wanted in both Dyvers and Verbobonc for horse thievery and mugging; in the City of Greyhawk, they are wanted for petty theft and arson in Greyhawk. The PCs receive 100 gp for each brother brought to justice, regardless of which city takes them into custody.

If the PCs slay Tibby and Barcus finds out, he is horrified and distraught. He honors his end of the bargain, although he becomes a less-than-jovial host. The PCs remind him of the death of his beloved pig, and his conversations turn maudlin whenever they are around.

CONTINUING THE
ADVENTURE

If any of the Brulligums escape, they make excellent recurring foes. The three ruffians take assaults on their gang personally, and they are exceptionally irritated if one of their number is slain. It's entirely possible they recruit more members as they gain in power, showing up on the PCs' proverbial doorstep with a larger, more menacing gang when they least expect it.

Tibby continues to grow as she matures, and it's possible that her naturally wild nature makes her too much of a handful for Barcus. He might approach the PCs after a year or so and ask them to take her off his hands or return her to the wild. A druid or ranger PCs might find her a welcome animal companion by the time she's fully grown.

AD HOC EXPERIENCE

Consider awarding some story awards to clever PCs who manage to circumvent certain obstacles.

If the characters can figure out what the Brulligum Brothers' plan after the initial encounter, award an additional 100 XP. If the PCs figure out "Garthulga" is actually Tibby before the encounter in the briar patch, award them 100 XP more. Finally, if the PCs return Tibby to Barcus unharmed, award them 200 XP.

Tim says, "I'd like to dedicate this adventure to Jim Townsend. In my campaign, Jim plays Frodi "Ironbelly," a tall, dark, mysterious swordsman from the North whose nerves cause him to throw up at the first sign of danger. Thankfully, Jim is nothing like his character, and on September 11th, he ran back through the World Trade Center to find me. It's kind of nice to know not everyone needs dice to be heroes."

PULP FICTION?

The following questions were submitted on our message boards by posters Allensh and Rabulias regarding Pulp Heroes from the last issue of POLYHEDRON. For answers, we've turned to the Pulp Heroes author, David Noonan.

Q: Is the All-American origin the only way to get the extras usually given to all humans in D&D, or do they all get it and the All-American gets even more?

A: Yep, All-American is pulp equivalent to D&D "human."

Q: Do characters receive a number of bonus languages equal to their Intelligence bonus ala D&D?

A: You get one bonus language per point of Int bonus.

Q: How is experience awarded—as per the D&D Player's Handbook?

A: Award experience as per D&D—the setting is mostly NPCs and traps, so setting CRs is pretty easy

Q: This might be a stupid question, but I assume that the base attack bonus for PCs includes the standard additional attacks, but they were not included for space reasons, right? That is, when a PC class has a base attack bonus of +20, that's just shorthand for +20/+15/+10/+5, right?

A: Yes, +20 is really shorthand for +20/+15/+10/+5.

Q: Pulp Heroes uses the D&D rules for attacks of opportunity. Now, the Player's Handbook says ranged weapons cannot be used for attacks of opportunity. Does this include guns? I would assume so, but there were some rather convincing arguments made that they should be able to make such attacks.

A: Pistols don't provoke attacks of opportunity, but larger firearms do. (This is mentioned in Chapter 7).

Q: What is the deal with Defense bonuses when multiclassing and do they not stack with armor bonuses as in STAR WARS? One of my players wanted to make a gadget using the mage armor spell but was dissuaded when he thought that once his class Defense bonus got higher than the armor bonus that it wouldn't work anymore.

A: Handle multiclass Defense just as you do in STAR WARS. The omission of the penalty for out-of-balance multiclassing is intentional. So go nuts.

FLIP THIS!

I got the DUNGEON/POLYHEDRON issue as the last of my magazine subscription to the RPGA. That's all well and good, but couldn't the publishers think of a less annoying way to fuse the two magazines?

As a consumer, I hate flip magazines. I like to pick up an issue, open to a random page, and flip either direction, avoiding ads and looking for good articles. When a magazine does the flip thing it drives me nuts. I then have to get reoriented and make note of the separation area to gain some comfort with the issue. It's not just DUNGEON/POLYHEDRON, but other magazines like Men's Health.

Couldn't you trim the extra pages and make a monthly (a smaller d20 section for serial information, releases, and other "crunchy bits" for those d20 enthusiasts—and still have great adventures) out of the new magazine? Or even change the content to have a single flowing layout?

Alex deMorris
Via Message Boards

For the time being, the format stays.

Taking DUNGEON monthly would murder the staff, drive up the price, kill our budget, and murder the staff.

Stripping POLYHEDRON down to a handful of pages on d20 releases seems not only to cheat the 10,000 or so subscribers who had their magazine mashed into another but also invalidates the point of covering d20 at all.

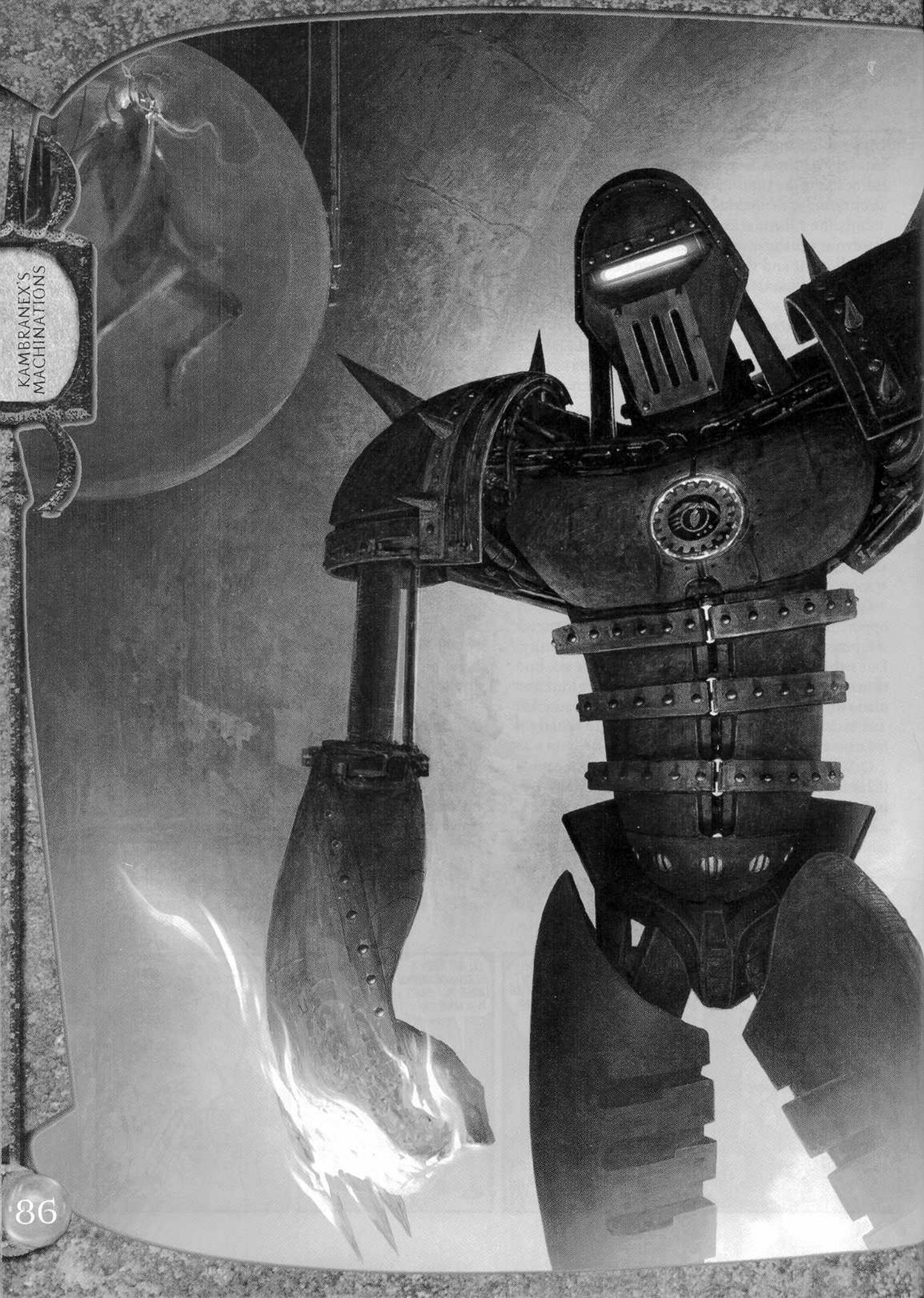
Without the d20 mini-game, POLYHEDRON is a lot less interesting to me. I know I'm certainly not the only audience for the magazine, but I do have a good deal of influence with the people who edit it. —Erik Mona

Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

"Letters" continued on page 112





KAMBRANEX'S MACHINATIONS

BY ROBERT LEE

ARTWORK BY KYLE J. ANDERSON • CARTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT LEE

| Magic Items ⚔ Monsters 🧙 NPCs 🗡 Objects 🏰 Settlements ⚠ Traps

"Kambranex's Machinations" is a D&D adventure for four 9th-level player characters (PCs). This adventure is ideal for good-aligned PCs, and the party would benefit from an arcane spellcaster. A rogue or bard with the Use Magic Device skill and a PC with the Wilderness Lore skill will also prove useful. PCs should advance to 10th level by the end of the adventure.

"Kambranex's Machinations" introduces bizarre technology discovered by a half-fiend wizard when he entered the Belching Vortex of Leuk-O. His uncanny talent for creating constructs has allowed him to develop a technique for attaching animated metal limbs to living creatures, which is presented as the "Half-machine" template at the end of the adventure.

The adventure references the Belching Vortex of Leuk-O described in *The Living Greyhawk Journal* #1, but that reference is not needed to play or run this adventure.

BACKGROUND

After visiting the otherworldly portal known as the Belching Vortex of Leuk-O, Kambranex, a half-demon wizard obsessed with creating constructs, returned to his lab within Mount Smolderac with new insights into his experiments, an epiphany of how the world should be, and a wasting disease of which he could not be cured.

The wizard had previously conducted his experiments in relative secrecy and silence, but since returning from the Vortex, Kambranex has terrorized the remote Flan village of Horntallow, using his magic and new half-machine minions to enslave the villagers in his volcanic mines, where they harvest precious metals for his experiments. Less fortunate

villagers are transported to his lab as subjects for his horrible experiments. Several captured villagers have attempted escape, but no one has succeeded.

A few villagers—led by the village's wise woman, Thayana—fled before Kambranex's creations overthrew the village. They now live in a series of caves, protected by a magnetic ore called magnelite that renders mechanical constructs inoperative. Unfortunately, the bioelectric energy produced by the villagers' bodies is slowly weakening the magnetic field, and soon the half-machine taskmasters will capture the remaining villagers and take them to Kambranex's lab.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

While traveling through a volcanic mountain range, the PCs encounter a primitive Flan tribesman running for his life. Moments later, several of Kambranex's taskmasters (led by a half-machine minotaur) catch up to the fleeing tribesman. A battle unfolds as the taskmasters attempt to capture the PCs as well. The tribesman speaks an ancient dialect of Flan, so the PCs cannot communicate with him without magical aid. He leads them to some nearby caves to meet Thayana the wise woman and the free members of his tribe.

Thayana is an adept. She casts *tongues* to communicate the tribe's dilemma to the PCs. She is about to call for volunteers to journey to Kambranex's lab when the PCs show up. The tribe has little to offer a group of adventurers, so the PCs must accept the task for what it is—the right thing to do and an opportunity to study a never-before-seen technology.

The PCs leave Horntallow for Kambranex's lab (assuming they agree to help Thayana). They must

battle a squad of half-machine tribesmen and survive a few encounters in the mountains. Ascending the volcano proves more difficult than expected.

With the help of some unlikely magmin allies, the PCs enter the lab and encounter several horrifying "experiments" (creatures with the half-machine template) and some incidental creatures. The PCs rescue several tribesmen who have yet to be mechanized, find a few items brought back from the Belching Vortex of Leuk-O, and finally encounter Kambranex's shield guardian. The shield guardian, known simply as "the Mechanic," has somehow been given sentience by its master and is in charge of assimilating humanity. Kambranex has attached himself to his lab, forever powering his infernal machine and his machine forever sustaining his disease-ridden body.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Getting the PCs to Mount Smolderac might take some effort—or at least a good adventure hook. The exact reason the PCs are in the area depends on your campaign, but here are a few possible adventure hooks:

- A local wizard offers 1,000 gp each for samples of magnelite, a rare magnetic ore found in volcanic regions. In fact, several magnelite deposits can be found in the caves where members of the Horntallow tribe are hiding.

- For several years, a clan of ogres has raided towns at the base of a volcanic mountain range. A few months ago, the raids stopped. The townsfolk fear the giants are planning a massive invasion. The town leaders want to employ a group of adventurers to find the ogres' encampment and return with their battle plans. In truth, there is no giant invasion. The ogre clan has been mechanized and now serves the Mechanic.

- One of the PCs, perhaps a bard or someone with the Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) skill, discovers the location of several tombs of a long-forgotten noble house. Allegedly, the entire bloodline was buried in crypts that encircle Mount Smolderac, with a network of connecting catacombs. According to ancient text, each family member was buried with his or her most valuable, magical possessions. This legend is false, unless you want to expand on the idea and give the PCs something more to explore.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Assume that the PCs have been in the mountains for some time, for whatever reason you have devised. As

they enter a quiet valley, the silence is broken by a desperate tribesman and his rapt pursuers—a squad of Kambranex's half-machine minions.

SCENE 1: DESPERATE TRIBESMAN (EL 11)

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The sun sets behind the mountains, painting the sky crimson, violet, and black. A fertile wooded valley reaches toward the horizon, and several small volcanoes spark the darkened landscape like lighthouses in a granite sea. The air is warm and quiet, carrying only the sound of a distant owl and the horrified screams of a lone figure running from the valley toward you.

The figure is Marew, a tribesman from the village of Horntallow. He is running from a half-machine minotaur and four half-machine ogres. He is 90 feet away, in light forest and in moonlight, so a successful Spot check (DC 25) is required to clearly discern Marew's appearance before initiative is rolled. The minotaur and the ogres come into view 1 round after the PCs spot Marew.

A bellowing creature charges forth, pursuing the horrified man. Its muscular humanoid body has the head of a bull, and it wields an enormous blood-stained greataxe. Black steel plates are riveted to its flesh, protecting vital areas and adding to its bulk. Its monstrous arms move like well-oiled machines, grinding loudly as hidden gears move in unison. The creature's eyes are dark green lenses. Most disturbing are its horns, which are fashioned from metal and have gleaming, serrated edges. Two flailing metal tentacles extend from below the creature's arms and extend toward the running man.

Four metal-plated ogres, sweating profusely and snorting loudly, move behind the minotaur with metal spears in hand. The ogres' warty snouts are replaced with corrugated metal tubes that flare with each growl. Metal plates hold the tubes in place, reinforcing their foreheads and cheekbones.

Creatures: Marew is fleeing the caves outside Horntallow to seek help against Kambranex and his creations. If the PCs agree to accompany him, he leads them back to the remnants of his tribe. Marew speaks an ancient dialect of Flan, incomprehensible even to those who speak modern Flan. If the PCs use *comprehend languages*, *tongues*, or similar magic, Marew begs them to follow him back to his tribe.

◆ **Marew, Male Human Com4:** hp 11 (currently 4); AL CG. Marew is 5 ft. 9 in. tall and thinly built. He has bronze skin, amber eyes, and short curly hair.

He wears a breech cloth, deerskin boots, and ivory jewelry. Tribal tattoos cover most of his body, especially his back.

Braumus (the half-machine minotaur) and the ogres have orders from the Mechanic to capture the villagers. When they see the PCs, they try to capture them as well. The ogres fight to the death. Braumus attempts to escape if reduced to 33 hit points or fewer, but if a dwarf (his favored enemy) is in the party, he attacks relentlessly. He uses his *shadow walk* card to return to Kambranex's lab only if he cannot escape and no dwarves are present.

➤ Braumus, Male Half-machine Minotaur

Rgr2: CR 9; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 6d10+24 (minotaur) plus 2d12+8 (ranger); hp 93; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (touch 9, flat-footed 22); Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (2d8+6/crit ×3, huge masterwork greataxe), +9 melee (2d8+3, gore), +9 melee (1d8+3, 2 metal tentacles); Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with tentacles); SA charge 5d6+6, favored enemy +1 (dwarves); SQ darkvision 60 ft., scent, natural cunning, partial construct, programmed, rust vulnerability, damage reduction 10/+1, *haste*; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +14, Intimidate +5, Jump +10, Listen +14, Search +8, Spot +23, Wilderness Lore +5. Mino-

taurs receive a +4 racial bonus to Listen, Search, and Spot checks (already added). **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Power Attack, Sunder, Track.

Languages: Common, Giant.

SA—Charge (Ex): Braumus can charge an opponent with his mechanized horns, dealing 5d6+6 points of damage.

SA—Favored Enemy (Ex): Braumus receives a +1 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks when using these skills against dwarves. This bonus also applies to damage rolls against dwarves.

SQ—Natural Cunning (Ex): Braumus has innate cunning and logic that makes him immune to *maze* spells, prevents him from becoming lost, and allows him to track enemies. He is never caught flat-footed.

SQ—Partial Construct (Ex): Half-machines are immune to poison and disease, are considered one size larger when determining death from massive damage, take only half damage from subdual attacks, and get a +4 resistance bonus to mind-influencing attacks and effects.

SQ—Programmed (Su): Braumus completely obeys its creator as if under the effects of a *dominate monster* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Kambranex's Machinations" is designed for 9th-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

5th- to 6th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following changes:

- Remove Braumus's ranger levels, and reduce the number of his ogre companions to two.
- Reduce the number of tribesfolk in scene 3 to four.
- Reduce the number of spider eaters to one.
- Reduce the number of magmin to six.
- Remove two of Pyron Eightskulls's heads.
- Remove Tazqualrin's expert levels.
- Make the half-machine umber hulk a half-machine troll instead.
- Consider removing some or all of the Mechanic's extras, such as his poison spikes or flaming fists. You might also consider making him a flesh golem instead of a shield guardian, or provide the PCs with some special equipment to handle such a challenging monster.

7th- to 8th-level PCs: Run the adventure with the changes above, but don't eliminate or change all of the extra challenging aspects of the encounters. Try to keep the ELs roughly at or just above the party's level. For example, only remove one of Pyron's heads and one of Tazqualrin's expert levels. In addition, give the PCs more time to rest between encounters.

10th- to 11th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written but with the following changes:

- Give Braumus one to two more ranger levels, or if you're really cruel, give him one to two barbarian levels.
- Increase the number of the tribesfolk in scene 3 to six.
- Add an extra half-machine spider eater.
- Increase the number of magmin to ten.
- Make Pyron Eightskulls a ten-headed hydra.
- Make Tazqualrin's two expert levels three fighter levels.
- Advance the half-machine umber hulk by 3 Hit Dice.
- Consider giving the mechanic some wizard levels, due to all the time spent in Kambranex's lab. Depending on your party's level or the size of your group, 1–3 levels wouldn't be uncalled for.

12th- to 13th-level PCs: Use the changes above for 10th- or 11th-level characters, but consider making the encounters even tougher by keeping the ELs at or just above the party's levels. Also, consider adding a more pressing time element to the adventure, such as informing the PCs that the tribesfolk's magnelite protection will only last for another day or two.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure. Consult page 170 in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* (Tables 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

SQ—Rust Vulnerability (Ex): Braumus is affected by rust attacks, such as that of the rust monster or a rusting grasp spell.

SQ—Haste (Sp): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, the half-machine minotaur can haste itself once per day as a standard action. The effect is the same as the *haste* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer.

Possessions: Huge masterwork greataxe, masterwork manacles with 5-foot chain, large pouch, 2 tanglefoot bags, a hollow bone blowtube filled with *dust of appearance*, a *brooch of shielding* (absorbs 82 points of *magic missile* damage), yellow passcard, *shadow walk* card (see Kambranex's Lab, area 2).

➤ **Half-machine Ogres (4):** CR 5; Large Giant; HD 4d10+16; hp 55, 41, 38, 37; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (touch 8, flat-footed 21); Atk +10 melee (2d6+7, 2 claws); or +11 melee (2d6+7, huge longsword); or +2 ranged (2d6+7, huge longsword); SA increased claw damage; SQ darkvision 60 ft., enhanced scent, partial construct, programmed, rust vulnerability; Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with longsword); AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +14, Listen +2, Spot +10. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Giant, Common.

SQ—Enhanced Scent (Ex): The half-machine's mechanized implants give it the Scent ability (see *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, page 81).

SQ—Partial Construct (Ex): See Braumus above..

SQ—Programmed (Su): See Braumus above..

SQ—Rust Vulnerability (Ex): See Braumus above.

Possessions: Huge longsword, loincloths.

SCENE 2: HORNTALLOW'S DILEMMA

Marew leads the PCs into the valley, past the burnt remains of the Horntallow village, and finally to a cave a few hundred yards west of the village. The trip takes approximately 1 hour. Quietly, Marew leads the PCs into a cave, where they are greeted by other tribesmen and offered food and drink. After a short comfortable wait, they are brought before Thayana, the tribal adept. Read or paraphrase the following to the players at that time:

Marew leads you into a dimly lit cave. Atop a pile of animal skins and bone talismans rests a venerable woman with skin like wrinkled leather, stark white hair, and coal-black eyes. She smiles at you, chants for a moment, then drinks a thick brown liquid from an owl's skull. Moments later, she greets you in Common.

"Welcome to the valley of Horntallow. I am Thayana, wise woman of the Horntallow tribe. By now you must realize we are in dire need of help.

"Long ago, a half-demon wizard named Kambranex built a lair inside Mount Smolderac, the great northern volcano. He coexisted peacefully with my tribe for many seasons. Then he vanished mysteriously.

"After twelve seasons, Kambranex returned and attacked Horntallow with strange metal servants. Most of our hunters were taken during the first raid, and the rest of us fled into this cave for safety. We soon found that the taskmasters could not come within a spear's throw of the cave without being incapacitated. But each day, the magic of the cave weakens and the taskmasters move closer.

"Kambranex enslaves my people in his volcanic mines, harvesting metals for his horrible experiments. The less fortunate are taken to his lab, transformed into half-metal creatures, and placed under his control. I beg you to help liberate my people from this madman."

Creature: Thayana is a small, elderly woman with dark skin, dark eyes, and stark white hair. She has a few tattoos and several facial piercings.

The brown liquid in the owl's skull is a *potion of tongues* that allows Thayana to speak with the PCs for 110 minutes. She gives the PCs two deerskin scrolls of *cure serious wounds* and a *potion of Wisdom* if they accept the mission.

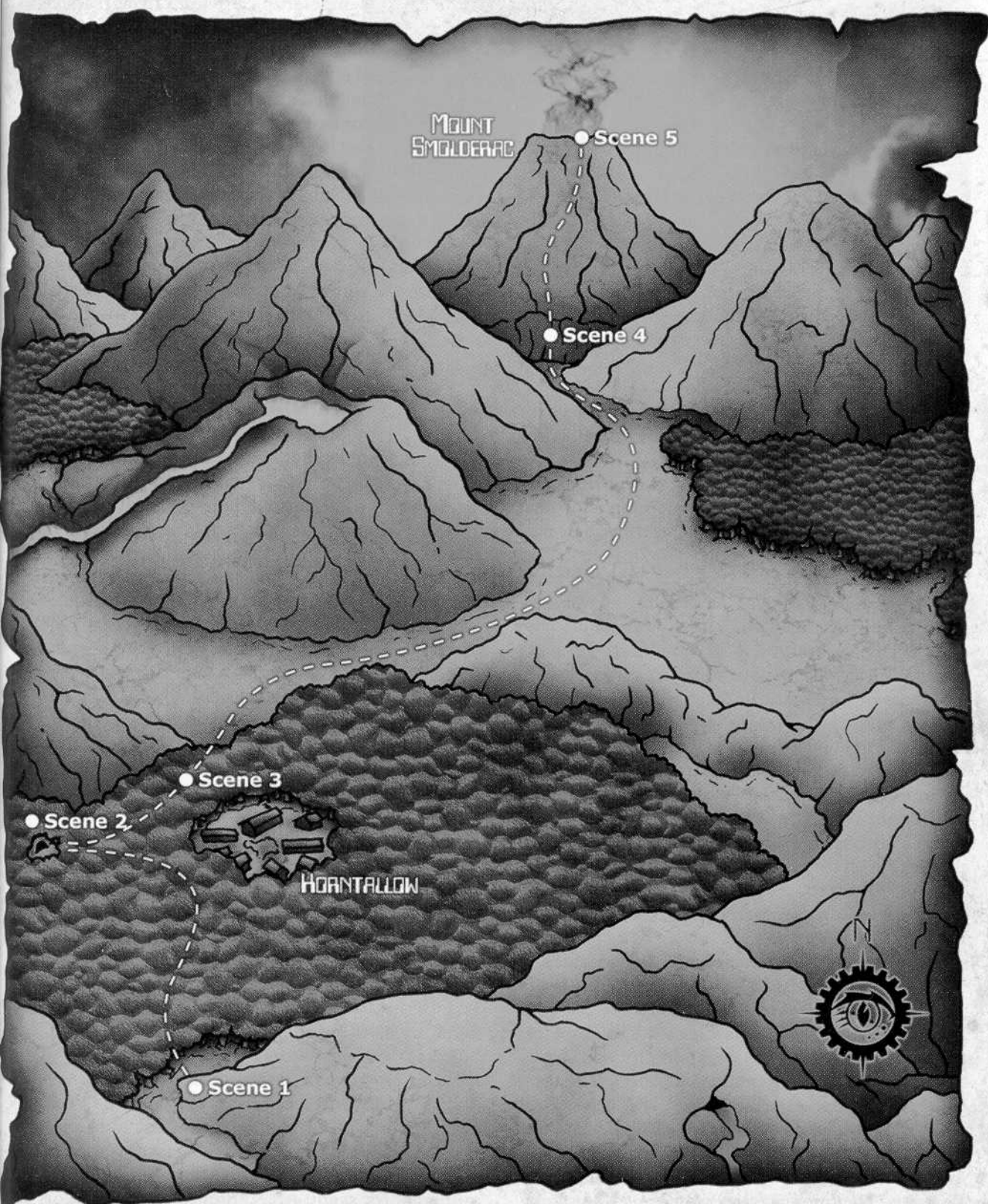
➤ **Thayana, Female Human Adept:** hp 13; AC 8; AL NG; Str 4, Dex 7, Con 6, Int 15, Wis 19, Cha 16.

Spells Prepared (3/4/4/3; base save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *light*; 1st—*comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from evil*; 2nd—*aid*, *cure moderate wounds* (×2), *resist elements*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*, *tongues*.

Possessions: *Potion of tongues* (cast at 11th level), *potion of Wisdom*, 2 deerskin scrolls of *cure serious wounds* (cast at 6th level), *ring of warmth*.

Treasure: The cave contains several magnelite deposits. PCs who makes a successful *Wisdom* check (DC 20) recognize the deposits and can collect 2d6 samples (each weighing 1 pound). PCs with the Profession (miner) or Craft (stonework and metalwork) skill can make a skill check in place of the *Wisdom* check and can gather one extra sample for each point by which the check exceeds the DC. Dwarves receive a +2 racial bonus to the check.

Development: PCs carrying one or more samples of magnelite receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their Armor Class against melee attacks from creatures with the half-machine template, as well as other metal constructs (like iron golems). This bonus does not stack regardless of the amount of



magnetite carried and lasts as long as the PCs carry the magnetite on their persons.

TO MOUNT SMOLDERAC

The trip from the tribal caves to Mount Smolderac takes 30 hours on foot. Mounts are unable to traverse the volcano itself (see Scene 4: Ashen Ascension), so they must be abandoned at that point. The PCs have a few encounters on the way to Kambranex's tower lair. The Mechanic has members of the Horntallow tribe and a few hillfolk working in mines around Mount Smolderac, under the close supervision of half-machine ogre taskmasters (same statistics as those in Scene 1) and fearsome mechanized abominations. The mines are not described here, but feel free to expand the adventure to include these locations.

SCENE 3: AMBUSH! (EL 9)

If the PCs make a successful Spot check (DC 15), read the boxed text below. If the Spot check fails, they get a Listen check (DC 15) when they are within 10 feet of the tribesmen to avoid being surprised. If Braumus the half-machine minotaur was not defeated earlier, he is leading the tribesmen and will not retreat this time.

Thick ferns and wild blackberry bushes cover the ground in this area. The treetops form a dark canopy above you. In the dark green shadows, 60 feet ahead, you notice the gleam of black metal and several humanoid silhouettes.

Creatures: These former Horntallow villagers have been mechanized and have orders to capture anyone leaving the cave. They attempt to ambush the PCs, surrounding them if they can. If Braumus is present, he uses his charge attack on any dwarf in the party, or on the PC who challenged him most in Scene 1.

If Braumus is present, this encounter becomes an EL 11 encounter.

➤ **Half-machine Tribesfolk, Male and Female Human War2 (6):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d10+6; hp 28, 26, 24 (x2), 22, 20; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (touch 13, flat-footed 18); Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, metal fist); SA damage die increase (fists); SQ partial construct, programmed, rust vulnerability; AL CG (programmed); SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +16, Jump +8, Listen +3, Spot +11, Swim +8. **Feats:** Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Unarmed Strike, Point Blank Shot, Run, Toughness.

Language: Flan.

SQ—Partial Construct (Ex): Half-machines are immune to poison and disease, are considered one size larger when determining death from massive damage, take only half damage from subdual attacks, and receive a +4 resistance bonus to mind-influencing attacks and effects.

SQ—Programmed (Su): A half-machine completely obeys its creator as if under the effects of a *dominate monster* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard.

SQ—Rust Vulnerability (Ex): These human half-machines are affected by rust attacks, such as that of the rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

SCENE 4: ASHEN ASCENSION (EL 10)

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach the base of Mount Smolderac:

Upon reaching the base of Mount Smolderac, you detect no visible trails ascending the volcano—only treacherous, ash-covered cliffs.

Mount Smolderac is completely surrounded by ashen cliffs. If the PCs spend 30 minutes or more looking for an easier way up, they find four ropes and two climbing kits left by a group of dwarves. During the climb, the PCs are attacked by mechanized spider eaters. The decaying bodies of five dwarven adventurers lay heaped in the spider eaters' nest 150 feet away from the climbing gear. The dwarves came to Mount Smolderac looking for new mining territory but found the spider eaters instead.

The PCs can take 10 on the climb. Climbing kits grant a +2 circumstance bonus to Climb checks, and using ropes lowers the DC to 10. If a PC takes damage while climbing, she must roll a successful Climb check against the wall's DC plus the amount of damage taken or fall.

Creatures: The Mechanic sent a pair of half-machine spider eaters to lair here and attack any nonmechanized creatures attempting to scale the cliffs. They attack anyone climbing more than 40 feet up the cliff face, droning loudly as they close to attack. They cannot surprise the characters.

➤ **Half-machine Spider Eaters (2):** CR 8; Huge Magical Beast; HD 4d12+28; hp 63, 52; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 21 (touch 9, flat-footed 20); Atk +9 melee (3d6+7 and poison, sting), +4 melee (1d8+4, 2 claws), +4 melee (1d8+4, bite); Face 10 ft. by 40 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA increased sting damage, poison, implant; SQ damage reduction 20/+2, darkvision 60 ft., freedom of movement, low-light vision, partial construct, programmed, rust vulnerability, scent; AL N (programmed); SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 25, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +21, Spot +21. Spider eaters receive a +4 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks (already added). **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Lightning Reflexes.

SA—Poison (Ex): Sting; Fortitude save (DC 17); initial damage none; secondary damage paralysis for 1d8+5 weeks.

SA—Implant (Ex): Female spider eaters lay their eggs inside paralyzed creatures of Huge or larger size. The young emerge about six weeks later, literally devouring the host from inside.

SQ—Freedom of Movement (Su): Spider eaters have *freedom of movement*, similar to the spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer. The effect can be dispelled, but the spider eater can create it again the next round as a free action. When the spider eater serves as a mount, this effect does not extend to its rider.

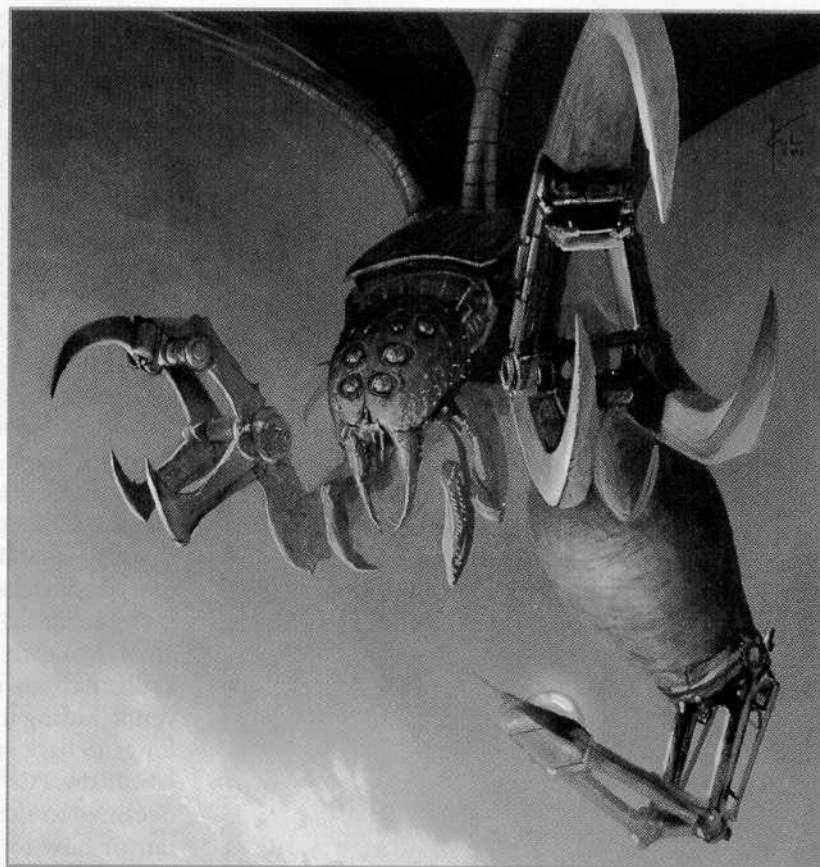
SQ—Partial Construct (Ex): Half-machines are immune to poison and disease, are considered one size larger when determining death from massive damage, take only half damage from subdual attacks, and receive a +4 resistance bonus to mind-influencing attacks and effects.

SQ—Programmed (Su): A half-machine completely obeys its creator as if under the effects of a *dominate monster* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard.

SQ—Rust Vulnerability (Ex): The half-machines are affected by rust attacks, such as that of the rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

Treasure: The dwarf adventurers had a few items that survived their encounter with the half-machine spider eaters: 3 amethysts (100 gp each), 2 moonstones (50 gp each), a platinum signet ring bearing the symbol of a flaming axe (350 gp), a *golembane scarab* (flesh golems), a *pearl of power* (1st-level spell), 3 doses of antitoxin, a masterwork dwarven waraxe, and a +1 *light crossbow* with a hole in the stock made by a half-machine spider eater's stinger.

Ad Hoc XP Adjustment: Battling the mechanized spider eaters while climbing the cliff makes for a difficult encounter. Due to the spider eaters' advantage, award the PCs 10% more XP for overcoming the encounter if they do not use magic such as *fly* or *teleport* to scale the cliff.



SCENE 5: DEAD END SUMMIT (EL 10, 6)

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text when the PCs reach the summit of Mount Smolderac, either by flying or climbing:

The crimson glow of Mount Smolderac's summit ignites the sky for miles. A lava-filled crater, half a mile wide, bubbles like a witch's cauldron and fills the air with sulfurous black smoke. In the center of the boiling volcano stands a 300-foot-tall basalt spire. The pinnacle of the spire holds a honeycomb of metal, stone, and glass, forming a forbidding complex of fiendish architecture.

The top of the basalt spire contains Kambranex's lab, which can be reached in one of two ways: by air or by lava tunnel. If the PCs attempt to cross the lava, they fall victim to the abysmal heat (see the Heat, Lava, Smoke, and Fire sidebar) and a ravenous swarm of rasts. If the PCs explore the tunnels under the spire, they encounter three magmins. Both the rasts and the magmins behave as described below.

Creatures (EL 10 for rasts, 6 for magmin): A swarm of rasts live in the honeycombed network of tunnels within the basalt spire. When a character makes it halfway across the lava cauldron, the rasts attack.

➤ **Rasts (6):** hp 36, 32, 25, 21, 18 (×2); *Monster Manual* 154.

PCs exploring the tunnels encounter a trio of magmins, who automatically notice the PCs unless they are invisible or hidden. After years of dealing with Kambranex, these magmins speak broken Common, so when they are discovered, they frantically offer to show the PCs a way into the lab for a small favor. The magmins insist the PCs meet their leader, King Moltono, before any deal is struck. If the heroes agree to follow the magmins, they are led safely to King Moltono's demesne (see Scene 6).

➤ **Magmins (3):** hp 13, 9, 7; *Monster Manual* 130.

Treasure: The rasts have acquired a substantial hoard while hunting for humanoid flesh. In a cave in the base of the spire can be found a cast-iron flask containing a *potion of spider climb* (cast at 8th level), a silver *ring of climbing* decorated with weblike etchings and an inlaid spider's eye, and a coal-black *cloak of minor fire resistance* (as a *ring of minor elemental resistance*).

SCENE 6: MAGMIN LAIR (EL 9)

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

If the PCs agree to meet King Moltono, the mis-

The tunnel gives way to a 15-foot-high natural cave, where several small, fiery humanoids bathe in a pool of bubbling lava. They cease their frolick-

ing and chatter as you enter. Your guides speak to them in a tongue that sounds like crackling fire. A moment later, a fat creature—slightly bigger than the others and immolated in flames—emerges from the fiery pool and approaches you with a smile on his molten face.

"I am King Moltono," the impish figure crackles in broken Common. "You want to find the wizard of the black spire, and I want to kill Pyron Eightskull. I have sought his cave for a long time. Past Pyron's lair a metal tunnel lies, leading to the wizard's spire. Kill Pyron, and we'll all be happy!"

chievous magmins lead them through a chaotic network of lava tunnels filled with pools of boiling magma and geysers of hot steam. Anyone entering the magmin lair is affected by its extreme heat, as described in the Heat, Lava, Smoke and Fire sidebar.

Creatures: King Moltono wants the PCs to kill an eight-headed pyrohydra they call Pyron Eightskull that has taken over the underground steam vents leading up to Kambranex's lab. King Moltono longs to bask in the steam vents of the pyrohydra's lair. If the PCs refuse to fight Pyron, the irate king declines to show them how to reach the wizard's lair or how to get back to the surface. If the PCs turn belligerent or hostile, Moltono loses his temper and orders all of his magmins to attack while he withdraws to the safe depths of his lava pool. If the PCs agree to fight Pyron, the magmins happily lead them to the pyrohydra's cave under the basalt spire.

Magmins like to get close to the PCs, thinking it funny that the PCs are actually discomfited by the intense heat.

➤ **Magmins (8):** hp 16 (King Moltono), 14, 12 (×2), 10, 9 (×3); *Monster Manual* 130.

Treasure: Hidden in a crevice beyond the northernmost bubbling pool of lava, the magmins have a small treasure consisting of 1,225 gp (in gold nuggets), 4 red garnets (75 gp each), 2 red spinels (140 gp each), and a *ring of feather falling*.

SCENE 7: PYRON EIGHTSKULL (EL 9)

Whether or not the PCs agree to King Moltono's request (see Scene 6), their underground approach to Kambranex's black spire leads them to the cave of a pyrohydra:



This cave is dimly illuminated by lava that trickles in through a fissure in the east wall. Thick steam reduces vision to a few feet. Without warning, a sound of grinding metal fills the cave. The temperature rises almost unbearably as a sudden rush of superheated steam issues from a large metal vent in the ceiling. Below the vent erupts a chorus of monstrous growls.

This steam-filled cavern is 70 feet wide, 85 feet long, and 30 feet high in the center. It lies directly below the basalt spire. To release the extreme pressure of the forge and other metalworking areas of his lab, Kambranex constructed a tunnel through the center of the basalt spire and into the ceiling of this chamber (see "The Steam Vent" below). The steam provides one-half concealment (a 20% miss chance to all attacks).

Creature: A pyrohydra (dubbed "Pyron Eightskull" by the magmins) basks under the steam vent and detects the PCs with its scent ability. It breathes fire the instant one or more PCs are detected entering the cave.

The pyrohydra keeps its treasure buried under a mound of dung in the northwest corner of its cave (see **Treasure**).

➤ **Pyron Eightskull, 8-headed Pyrohydra:** CR 9; Huge Beast (20 ft. long); HD 8d10+40; hp 96; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 14); Atk +8 melee (1d10+4, 8 bites); Face 20 ft. by 20 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ fire subtype, scent, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 9.

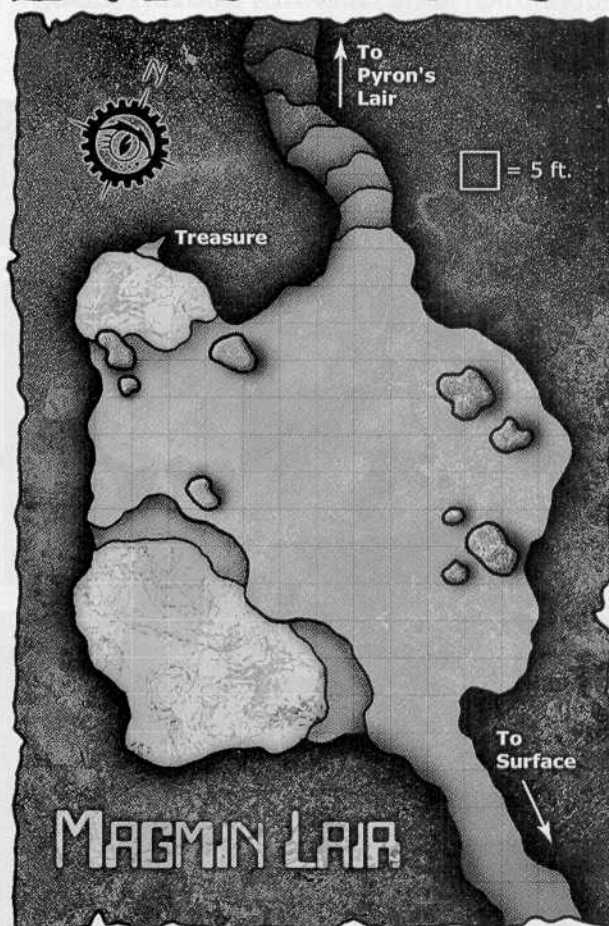
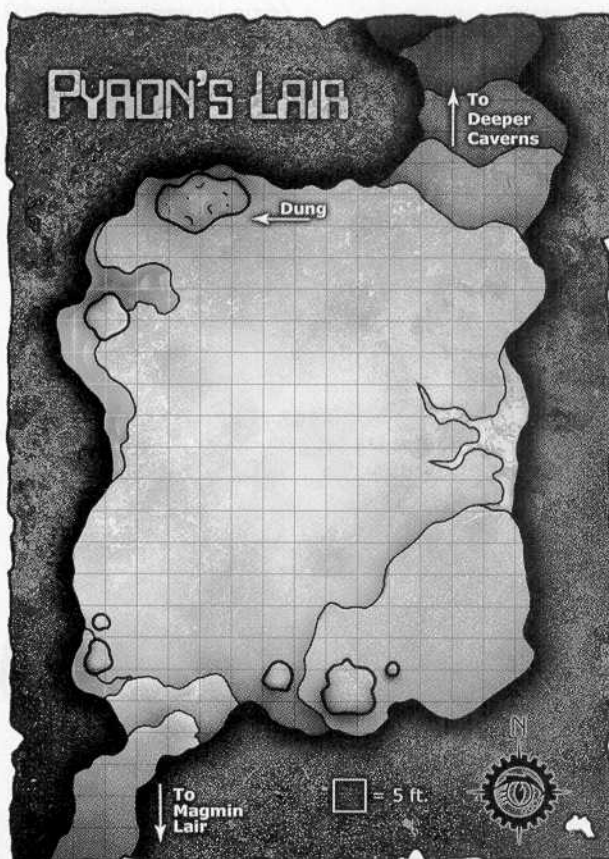
Skills: Listen +9, Spot +9. Hydras receive a +2 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks (already added).
Feats: Combat Reflexes.

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, all of Pyron's heads can breathe lines of fire 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, and 20 feet long. Each jet deals 3d6 points of damage; a successful Reflex save (DC 19) halves the damage.

SQ—Fire Subtype (Ex): Pyron is immune to fire and takes double damage from cold except on a successful save.

SQ—Scent: Pyron can detect opponents within 30 feet by scent. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

Treasure: A few minutes wading in Pyron's dunghill and a successful Search check (DC 15) reveals a +1 small steel shield of light fortification and a green passcard to some areas of Kambranex's lab. The passcard was accidentally dropped into Pyron's chamber some time ago by an animated worker that was repairing a vent in the steam tunnel.



THE STEAM VENT (EL 2)

The metallic vent in the cave's 30-foot-high ceiling is difficult to reach. There are no rock formations close enough to help with the climb, and it is impossible to attach a rope to the vent or enter it while its 10-foot-diameter iron doors are closed. The PCs can wait 1d6 rounds for the vent to open, slipping in before it closes 1d6 rounds later and taking 2d6 points of steam damage per round. They can pry open a door with a successful Strength check (DC 20), or they can unhinge one of the doors with a successful Disable Device check (DC 21).

Anything or anyone caught between the vent doors when they close takes 3d6 points of damage each round until the doors reopen.

❖ **Iron Steam Vent Doors:** 1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 25; Strength check (DC 20) to pry open; Disable Device (DC 20) to unhinge.

Trap: Anyone directly underneath the vent when it opens takes 3d6 points of damage from a blast of hot steam. A successful Reflex save (DC 13) halves the damage.

➤ **Steam Blast:** CR 2; 10-foot spray of steam (3d6 points of damage); Reflex save (DC 13) for half damage; Search (n/a); Disable Device (n/a).

SCENE 8: UP THE STEAM TUNNEL (EL 8)

As the PCs explore the vertical steam tunnel leading up the spire, read or paraphrase the following:

A 20-foot-wide, vertical, smooth metal shaft leads up into darkness. The air is humid, and the walls are moist, slippery, and hot. Small, 1-foot-square vents are set into the walls of the shaft at seemingly random intervals.

The tunnel leads 350 feet up to area 1 of Kambranex's lab. Scaling the slippery metal wall requires a successful Climb check (DC 30). The PCs can take 10 on the climb. Climbing kits grant a +2 circumstance bonus to Climb checks, and attaching ropes to the small vents in the walls lowers the DC to 15.

Trap: Every 1d6 rounds, the small vents in the walls of the shaft release scalding blasts of steam, which are drawn down into the pyrohydra's cavern. PCs in the shaft at that time must succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC 13) or take 1d6 points of heat damage; those who suffer damage must succeed at a Climb check or fall. Add 1 to the DC of the Climb check for each point of damage dealt by the steam. For example, a character using equipment to scale the shaft normally makes Climb checks (DC 15), but after taking 3 points of steam damage he must succeed at a DC 18 Climb check or fall.

➤ **Slippery Metal Shaft with Steam Vents:** CR 8; steam (1d6) plus fall (1d6 per 10 feet, maximum 20d6); Reflex save (DC 13) halves damage from the steam; Climb check (DC 10 + steam damage) to avoid falling.



Development: When the PCs reach the top of the tunnel, they find a round, 3-foot-diameter hatch in the center of the shaft's roof. A circular handle must be turned clockwise to open the hatch. Reaching the hatch requires magic (such as *levitate* or *fly*), a 10-foot-reach (for creatures scaling the shaft's walls), or a successful Climb check (DC 20). The hatch's hinges are on the floor above, so they cannot be removed.

◆ **Iron Hatch:** 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

KAMBRANEX'S LAB

The lab has three levels: the foundry (area 1), the mechanizing area (areas 2–6), and Kambranex's private sanctum (area 7). The arched ceilings, sharp corners, organic textures, and cold organization seem fiendishly inspired. Unless otherwise noted, the features below are common throughout the spire.

◆ **Exterior Walls (Magically Treated, Hewn Basalt):** 3 ft. thick; Hardness 16; hp 1,080; Break DC 50; Climb DC 22. These walls deny all magical means of passage and detection from outside the lab, such as *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *discern location*, *ethereal jaunt*, *passwall*, *phase door*, *prying eyes*, *teleport*, and similar spells. Area 2 is an exception to this rule.

◆ **Interior Iron Walls:** 3 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 30; Climb DC 25.

◆ **Interior Floors and Ceilings (Hewn Basalt with Layer of Iron):** 3 ft. thick hewn stone and 1 in. thick iron; Hardness 8 (basalt), 10 (iron); hp 540 (basalt), 30 (iron); Break DC 76.

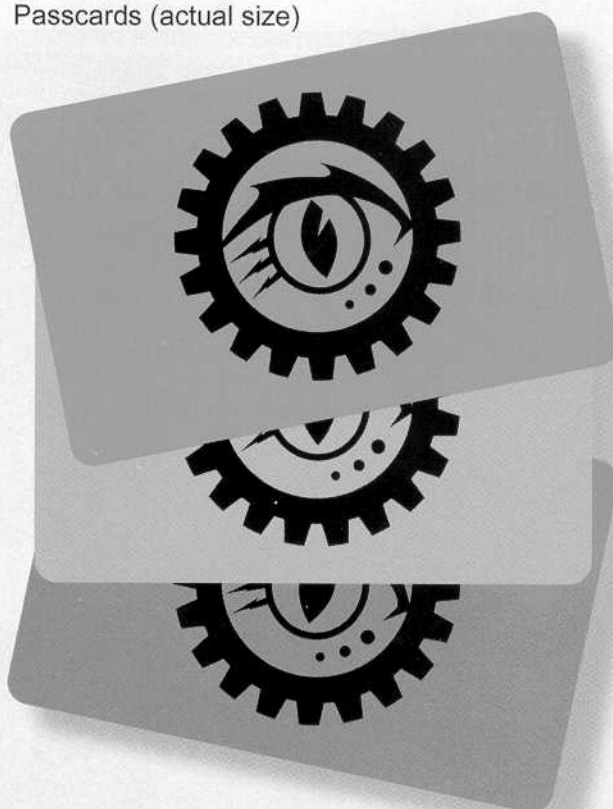
◆ **Iron Doors:** 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Locks DC 33+. All doors have a glowing green, yellow, or red symbol of Kambranex at eye level to which a matching passcard or one of a higher security level (see below) must be presented to open them. The doors "open" by fading into the Ethereal Plane for as long as the doorway is occupied plus 1 round, then reappear.

Incorporeal creatures or ghost touch armor and weapons cannot pass through these doorways while they are open.

◆ **Secret Iron Doors:** 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Search DC 25. The symbol of Kambranex is not present on secret doors, but a red passcard must be presented before they will open. These doors open and behave similarly to the visible iron doors otherwise.

◆ **Passcards:** 1/16 in. thick; Hardness 2; hp 10; Break DC 20. These thin, color-coded cards (see the adjacent diagram) bear the symbol of Kambranex and are made of a strange durable metal that is immune to fire damage. When a passcard of the appropriate color is presented within 1 foot of the

Passcards (actual size)



glowing symbol of Kambranex on an iron door, the door opens. Green cards grant access to low security areas, yellow cards open doors to medium security areas, and red cards unlock doors to maximum security areas. A passcard can open doors of its color and lower. The passcard needed for each room is noted in the area descriptions.

Elevator: A magically powered elevator connects the three levels of the lab—a green passcard is needed to enter it. Once inside, the elevator responds to the command words "up," "down," "level one," "level two," "level three," and "stop."

Visibility: Eerie magical light fills most of the lab. Hallways have glowing-red symbols of Kambranex set into the floor, and most doors have dimly glowing green, yellow, or red symbols of Kambranex at eye level.

Odor: A nauseating stench of brimstone mixed with iron, scorched flesh, acrid chemicals, and blood permeates most areas of the lab.

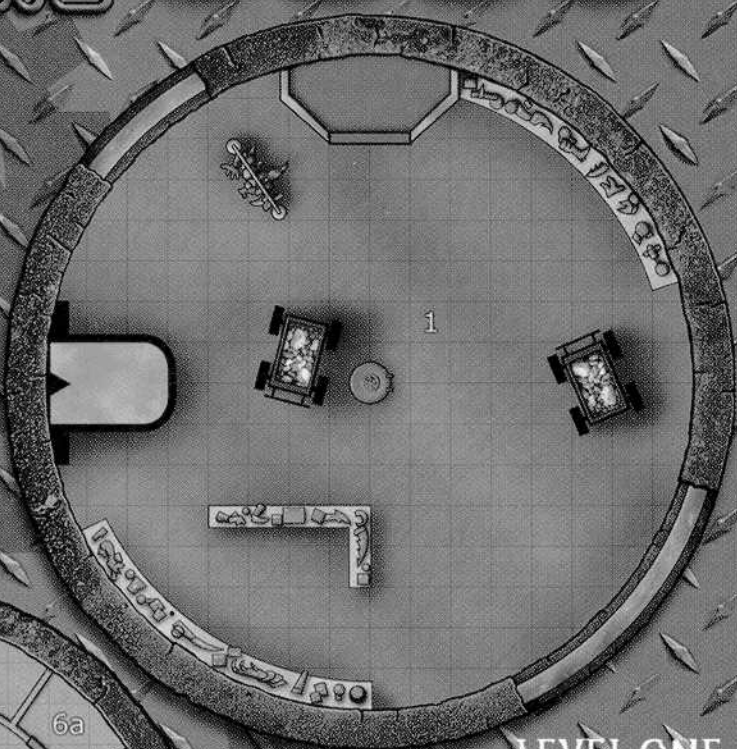
Temperature: The temperature remains a warm 85° F. The foundry (area 1) is much warmer.

1. FOUNDRY (EL 9)

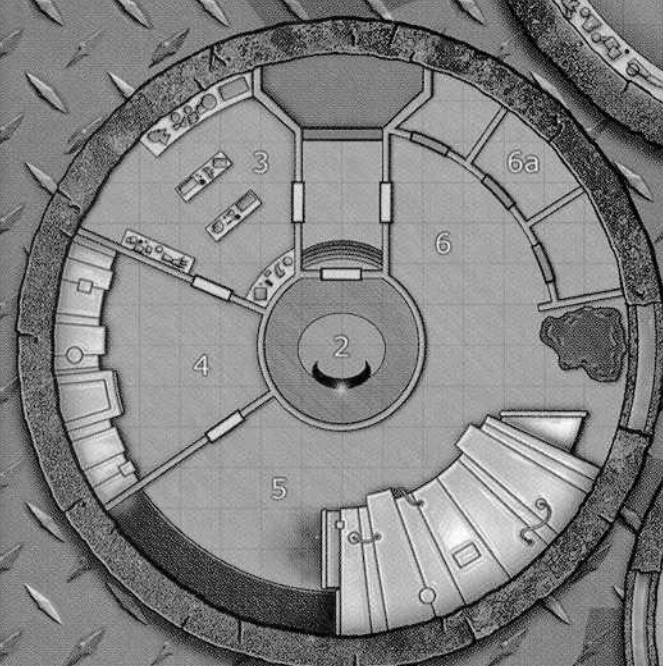
Metal limbs forged here are sent to Level Two, where they are animated and fitted to living hosts. The PCs enter the foundry as Tazqualrin, the salamander metalsmith, disciplines his six azer workers by lashing them with his mechanized tail.

KAMBRANEX'S LAB

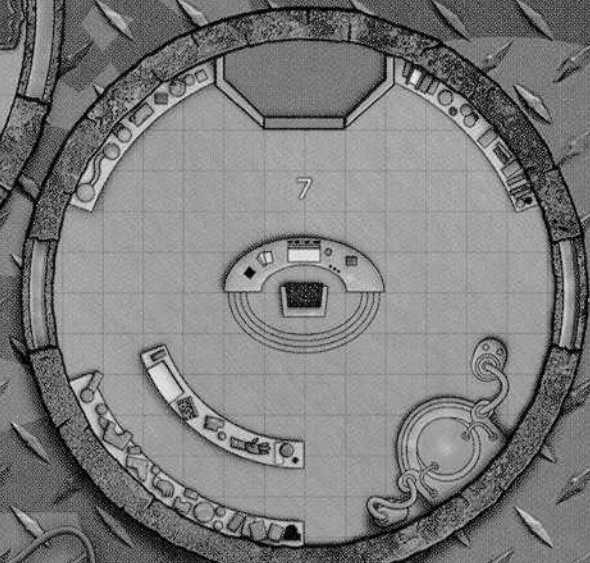
□ = 5 ft.



LEVEL ONE



LEVEL TWO



LEVEL THREE

An enormous forge fills this chamber with sweltering heat and a fiery glow. The floor is made of smooth black iron, and the walls and ceiling are polished basalt. The chamber is stained with soot. The crack of a whip and cries of pain echo from behind a cart filled with raw iron ore. A reptilian creature bathed in crimson flames lashes at six cowering workers with its horribly serrated, black metal tail. The workers resemble beardless dwarves with flames engulfing their bodies.

The half-machine salamander has a -10 circumstance penalty to Spot checks and Listen checks to notice the PCs due to the ore cart and his preoccupation with the azers. When Tazqualrin sees the PCs, he attacks and orders the workers to help him. The azers wait 2 rounds; if the PCs seem to be winning, they attack Tazqualrin instead.

An ore cart deals 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage if used with a charge attack to ram an opponent.

The shelf on the south wall holds partially assembled metal limbs forged for various species. A *permanent wall of force* window faces southeast, overlooking the lava cauldron 250 feet below. A wheeled rack of completed limbs—ready to be mechanized—rests to the northeast. On the north wall, an iron door bearing a green symbol of Kambranex opens to an elevator.

The forge contains magic fire that deals 15d6 points of damage each round to anyone inside it; a Reflex save (DC 17) halves the damage. The forge can be extinguished only by a *dispel magic*, *quench*, or similar spell cast against a 20th-level caster. The forge grants a +4 competence bonus to Craft (armorsmithing, metalworking, and weapon-smithing) checks.

Creatures: Tazqualrin serves Kambranex and the Mechanic loyally. He is hot-tempered and attacks without provocation. Given the opportunity, he tries to grab opponents with his tail and hurl them into the forge; the salamander can do this instead of dealing constriction damage. Tazqualrin tries to escape to warn the Mechanic if he is reduced to 30 hit points or fewer.

If Tazqualrin convinces the azers to attack the PCs, treat the encounter as EL 12.

➤ **Tazqualrin, Half-machine Salamander**
Exp2 (metalsmith): CR 9; Medium-Size Outsider (Fire); HD 7d10+21 (salamander) and 2d8+6 (Exp2); hp 77; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27 (touch 12, flat-footed 25); Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire, hammer), +9 melee (3d6+3 plus 1d6 fire, serrated metal tail), +9 melee (1d3+4 plus 1d6 fire, bite); SA breath weapon (3d6 fire damage), constrict 3d6+3 plus 1d6 fire, heat, increased tail damage; SQ cold resistance 20, damage reduction 10/+1, fire subtype,

partial construct, programmed, rust vulnerability, shielded mind, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Skills: Craft (metalworking) +20 (includes Skill Focus feat), Escape Artist +11, Hide +11, Intimidate +15, Listen +14, Move Silently +11, Search +20, Sense Motive +10, Spot +14. The salamanders receive a +4 racial bonus to Craft (metalworking) skill checks (already added). **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Craft [metalworking]).

Languages: Common, Ignan.

SA—Heat (Ex): A salamander's touch and metallic weapons generate so much heat that they deal an additional 1d6 points of fire damage per successful attack.

SA—Constrict (Ex): With a successful grapple check against creatures up to one size larger than itself, a salamander deals automatic tail slap damage (including fire damage).

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): As a standard action once per day, Tazqualrin can belch forth a 30-foot-long cone of fire that deals 3d6 points of damage to anyone in the area of effect. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 18) halves the damage.

SQ—Fire Subtype (Ex): Salamanders have fire immunity and take double damage from cold, except on a successful saving throw.

SQ—Partial Construct (Ex): Half-machines are immune to poison and disease, are considered one size larger when determining death from massive damage, take only half damage from subdual attacks, and get a +4 resistance bonus to mind-influencing attacks and effects.

SQ—Programmed (Su): A half-machine completely obeys its creator as if under the effects of a *dominate monster* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard.

SQ—Rust Vulnerability (Ex): The half-machine salamander is affected by rust attacks, such as that of the rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

SQ—Shielded Mind (Su): The half-machine salamander is immune to mind-affecting attacks.

Possessions: Metal pouch with a chain belt containing a yellow passcard.

The azers have endured Tazqualrin's brutality for a long time. They know almost nothing about the rest of the lab except that Tazqualrin uses the yellow card in his pouch to open the door to the "lift pad" when he takes the finished limbs to the upper levels. They have heard the salamander mention the name "Kambranex," but they have never seen the wizard or his shield guardian. The azers want to leave and refuse to accompany the PCs into the upper levels; only *dominate monster*, *suggestion*,

and similar spells can persuade the azers to change their minds.

➤ **Azers (6):** hp 18, 15, 13, 11 (×2), 9; *Monster Manual* 22.

Treasure: The ore cart by the east wall holds 13 gold nuggets worth a total of 1,150 gp and 5 chunks of mithril (400 gp each), all buried under iron ore. Finding the treasure requires a successful Search check (DC 10).

2. SHADOW WALK ROOM

The door to this chamber requires a yellow passcard or a successful Open Locks check (DC 33) to open.

A large symbol on the ceiling casts a scarlet glow upon this circular room. In the center of the room, a crescent-shaped iron podium stands atop a large dais. A yellow symbol similar to the one on the ceiling, only smaller, glows atop of the podium, and a passcard-sized indentation marks its center.

If a PC steps onto the dais and presents a yellow or red passcard to the symbol of Kambranex on the podium, arcane symbols and complex controls appear atop the podium, and the symbol of Kambranex on the ceiling dims. If the PCs place a *shadow walk* card (see Scene 1 or area 7a) in the indentation and configures the controls correctly (as described below), they activate a *shadow walk* spell (as cast by a 20th-level wizard). When the *shadow walk* card is removed from the indentation, the cardholder and up to nineteen others in the room are transported to the Plane of Shadow. Configuring the controls properly requires a successful Spellcraft or Use Magic Device check (DC 25). If a PC fails the check by 10 or more, she alone is transported to the Plane of Shadow. If a PC fails the check with a natural "1," she and all intended passengers spiral violently through the coiling path of shadowstuff to a random location in the Plane of Shadow.

The PC holding the *shadow walk* card has 5 days to transport back to the pad—with up to nineteen others—simply by grasping the card and willing herself to return.

Each *shadow walk* card can be used only once, crumbling away upon return to the lab.

Development: If a PC activates the *shadow walk* pad and leaves a *shadow walk* card in the indentation, the path to the Plane of Shadow remains open for 1 hour. If the PCs are forced to retreat from the lab, they can make a quick escape here.

3. ANIMATION CHAMBER (EL 6)

The door to this chamber requires a yellow passcard or a successful Open Locks check (DC 33) to open.

Four humanoid metalworkers with clawlike hands hastily assemble, weld, and polish metal limbs from the foundry. Each worker has a single eye in the center of its disk-shaped head. The workers roll about on three wheels, placing limbs on a conveyer belt that carries them through a hole in the wall.

Creatures: Kambranex built four animated, humanoid workers to fit the metal limbs from the foundry with gears and wires. If the PCs touch the mechanical limbs, block the path to the conveyer belt, or disturb the tools on the tables, the animated workers attack. The workers do not leave this chamber and resume their work as soon as the PCs leave.

➤ **Animated Workers (4):** CR 2; Medium-size Construct (5 ft. tall); HD 2d10; hp 11 each; Init +0; Spd 60 ft. (wheels); AC 18 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam), –3 melee (1d6 heat, welder); SA disassemble; SQ construct, hardness 10; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will –5; Str 12, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA—*Disassemble (Ex)*: If an animated worker makes a successful melee touch attack against an armored creature, it rapidly removes bolts, buckles, rivets, and stitches, effectively weakening the armor. Every successful disassemble attack lowers the armor's bonus by 1d4 points. Damage dealt to armor in this way is permanent until repaired.

SQ—*Construct*: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Treasure: Four masterwork toolkits lie about the room. The toolkits are worth 55 gp each and grant a +2 circumstance bonus to skills such as Craft (trap-making), Craft (metalworking), and Disable Device.

Development: Disturbing the animated workers holds up the assembly line. If the workers stop production for 5 or more rounds, the mechanized umber hulk from area 5 comes to investigate. If a PC puts anything onto the conveyer belt, see area 4.

4. ENCHANTMENT ROOM (EL 7)

The door to this room requires a yellow passcard or a successful Open Locks check (DC 33) to open.

This room pulses with magical energy emanating within a partly mechanical, partly organic machine spanning the west wall. Arcane symbols and controls adorn a control panel on the side of the machine.

Trap: The mechanical conveyor running through this room imbues the items assembled in area 3 with magical energy (in preparation for attachment

to living tissue in area 5). Only items forged in area 1 and assembled by the animated workers in area 3 are affected. Living tissue is not harmed by passing through the enchantment conduit, as are nonmagic items not fabricated in the lab. Magic items taken through the machine must succeed at a Will save (DC 23) or lose their enchantments as if affected by a *Mordenkainen's disjunction* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard. If the conveyor machine is destroyed, the *Mordenkainen's disjunction* spell affects everything in the room. See "Damaging Magic Items" on page 176 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* for information on item saving throws.

A rogue or bard can attempt a Disable Device check or Use Magic Device check (player's choice) to turn the machine off by hitting the correct sequence of buttons and switches on the control panel. If either check fails by 10 or more, the *Mordenkainen's disjunction* trap triggers, affecting everything in the room. PCs can retry but cannot take 10 on these checks.

➤ **Mordenkainen's Disjunction Trap:** CR 7; magic items are disjoined; Will save (DC 23) negates; Search (DC 34); Disable Device (DC 34); Use Magic Device (DC 25).

◆ **Mechanical Conveyor:** 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 120; Break DC 28.

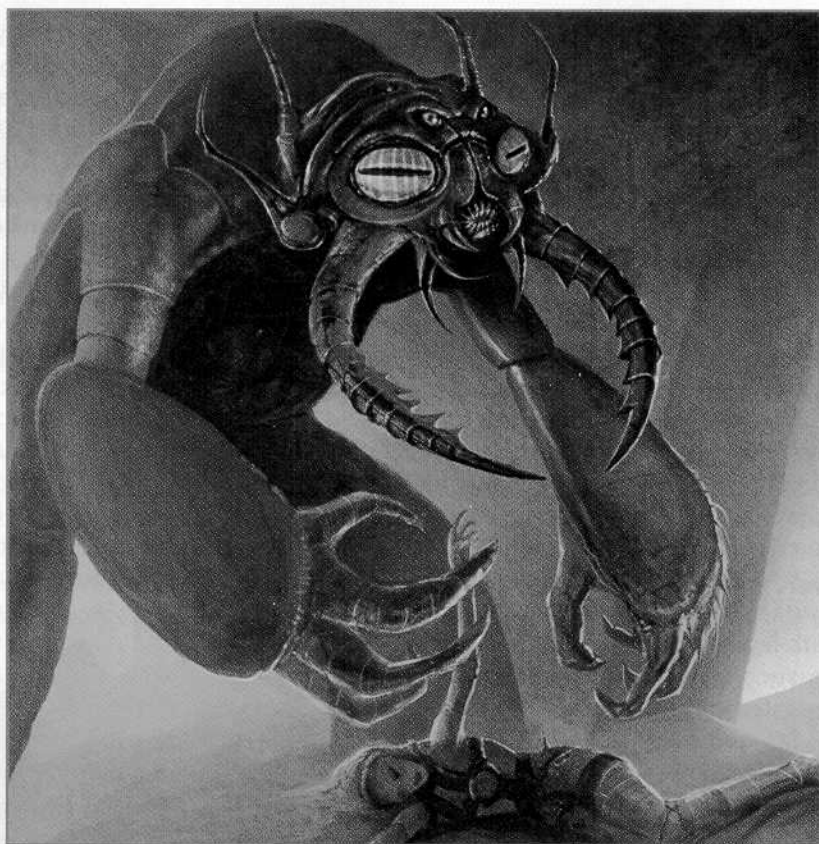
Development: If the enchantment conveyor shuts down for 4 or more rounds, the mechanized umber hulk from area 5 investigates.

5. ATTACHMENT CHAMBER (EL 10+)

The door to this chamber requires a yellow passcard or a successful Open Locks check (DC 33) to open.

This chamber reeks of burnt flesh, blood, and electricity. A huge machine at the end of a conveyor belt fills the room with dreadful grinding noises. Suddenly, a woman is expelled from the machine and falls limply to the floor. Her new metal limbs gleam in the dim light, but it seems she didn't survive the mechanical transformation.

The actual mechanizing process occurs here. Assembled metal limbs are stored in the attachment machine until a living candidate is sent through by



the room's mechanized umber hulk overseer. The machine paralyzes the creature, removes the creature's limbs, installs the necessary enhancements, cauterizes the wounds, and programs the creature to be subservient to the Mechanic before expelling it onto the floor. The woman on the floor is a member of the Horntallow tribe. She did not survive the hideous transformation.

Creature: If the umber hulk has not been encountered elsewhere, it is here. If the PCs enter from area 4, the overseer is standing in area 6. If they enter from area 6, the overseer is standing in area 4. The overseer means to check on its latest specimen (the Flan woman), but as soon as it sees or hears the PCs, it attacks and tries to "feed" them to the attachment machine. The umber hulk must succeed at grappling a character before it can hurl its captive into the attachment machine. If reduced to 46 hit points or fewer, the umber hulk activates its *improved invisibility* and fights to kill.

If a character falls victim to the umber hulk's *confusion* gaze, a roll of "1" on the *confusion* spell table means that the PC wanders blissfully into the attachment machine.

➤ **Half-machine UMBER Hulk:** CR 10; Large Aberration; HD 8d10+48; hp 92; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 25 (touch 10, flat-footed 24); Atk +13 melee (3d4+8, 2 claws), +11 melee (2d8+4, bite);

Reach 10 ft.; SA breath weapon (cone of sleep gas), confusion gaze, increased claw damage; SQ partial construct, improved invisibility, programmed, rust vulnerability, tremorsense, darkvision 60 ft.; SR 16; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +19, Jump +16, Listen +21, Spot +10.
Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Run.

Language: Umber Hulk, Undercommon.

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): As a standard action once per day, the half-machine umber hulk can belch forth a 40-foot-long cone of sleep gas (as a *sleep* spell cast by a 5th-level sorcerer, without the restriction on Hit Dice or number of targets). Anyone caught by the cone must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 17) or succumb to the gas for 5 rounds.

SA—Confusion Gaze (Su): Looking into an umber hulk's eyes causes *confusion*, as cast by an 8th-level sorcerer at a range of 30 feet. A successful Will save (DC 15) negates the effect.

SQ—Partial Construct (Ex): Half-machines are immune to poison and disease, are considered one size larger when determining death from massive damage, take only half damage from subdual attacks, and receive a +4 resistance bonus to mind-affecting attacks and effects.

SQ—Improved Invisibility (Sp): The half-machine can make itself invisible once per day as a standard action by bending light around its body. The effect is otherwise the same as the *improved invisibility* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer.

SQ—Programmed (Su): A half-machine completely obeys its creator as if under the effects of a *dominate monster* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard.

SQ—Rust Vulnerability (Ex): The half-machine umber hulk is affected by rust attacks, such as that of the rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

SQ—Tremorsense (Ex): Umber hulks automatically sense the location of anything touching the ground within 60 feet.

Possessions: The overseer wears a red passcard on a chain around its massive neck.

Trap: When a nonmechanized creature comes within 5 feet of the attachment machine's entrance, four retractable metal tentacles spring from the opening and attempt to pull the victim inside. The

only way to stop the attachment machine is by destroying it or unplugging Kambranex in area 7.

➤ **Attachment Machine:** CR 7; Huge Construct; HD 8d10; hp 70; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 14 (touch 8, flat-footed 14); Atk +9 melee touch (1d3 subdual plus paralysis, 4 tentacles); Reach 10 ft.; SA Improved grab, mechanize, paralysis; SQ Construct, darkvision 60 ft., hardness 10; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA—Improved Grab (Ex): If the attachment machine hits an opponent of up to Huge size with a tentacle attack, it gets a free grapple attack. If the grapple is successful, the attachment machine attempts to mechanize its victim.

SA—Mechanize (Ex): Once a creature is successfully grappled, it is pulled inside the machine, which paralyzes the creature, removes its limbs, installs the necessary enhancements, cauterizes wounds, and programs the creature to be subservient to

the Mechanic. Each enhancement a creature receives deals 1d6 points of damage. Through a complex program that measures the creature's size and weight, the machine judges how many enhancements a creature can withstand, adding only the appropriate amount of enhancements. So, if a 1-Hit-Die creature is mechanized, it receives a single enhancement. If a 9-Hit-Die or more powerful creature is mechanized, it receives all six possible enhancements. If a creature is mechanized while wounded, the machine could make a fatal

mistake and add too many enhancements. The mechanizing process takes 2 minutes plus 1 minute for each enhancement a creature receives.

After being expelled from the machine, a newly mechanized creature falls to the ground, helpless for 1 full round. After that round, the creature must make a successful Will save (DC 15, -1 for each previous save) each round to act. A newly mechanized creature can take only partial actions until the damage dealt by the attachment machine is fully healed.

SA—Paralysis (Ex): Creatures held in the tentacles must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 16) or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds. While held in the tentacles, paralyzed or not, the victim automatically takes 1d3 points of subdual damage each round.

SQ—Construct: Immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to



critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Treasure: If the PCs search the half-machine umber hulk's nest by the window, they find a *Heward's handy haversack* containing 1,700 gp; a scroll of *mirror image* and a scroll of *bull's strength* in a platinum-trimmed ivory scrollcase (55 gp); and a *potion of protection from elements* (electricity).

Development: Once a PC recovers from being mechanized, he becomes an NPC and helps the umber hulk capture the rest of the party.

6. HOLDING CELLS

The door to this chamber requires a yellow passcard or a successful Open Locks check (DC 33) to open. The cells require a red passcard or a difficult Open Locks check (DC 36) to open.

These three cells are designed to hold creatures until they can be mechanized. Cell 6a is the only one currently occupied.

Creatures: Eight Horntallow tribesfolk are held in cell 6a. A PC who makes a successful Listen check (DC 25) at the door hears people mumbling and weeping inside.

♣ **Horntallow Tribesfolk, Male and Female Human Com1** (8): hp 4, 3 (×3), 2 (×3), 1.

Ad Hoc XP Adjustment: The PCs should receive XP equal to an CR 4 encounter for rescuing these people from Kambranex's lab.

7. GENERATOR ROOM (EL 12+)

A red symbol of Kambranex appears on the elevator door, which requires a red passcard or a successful Open Locks check (DC 36) to open.

Kambranex's private chamber is divided into five

A familiar symbol on the ceiling illuminates this 20-foot-tall chamber with a hellish glow. An iron and basalt desk dominates the center of the room. An iron bookshelf, sparsely filled with ancient tomes, scroll cases, and other arcane items, spans the wall to your left. A fantastic machine dominates the far side of the room. Atop the machine, 10 feet off the floor, a burgundy-skinned man with long gray hair and a bronze amulet around his neck floats limply in a glass bubble filled with glowing-green liquid. Electricity pulses through the liquid, causing his emaciated body to jerk spasmodically.

A hulking figure made of gleaming-black metal kneels on the steps beneath the floating man like a squire waiting to be knighted. Near the machine is a sophisticated workshop where metal limbs and strange tools cover two long workbenches. To your right stands a modest alchemy lab that has seen little use.

lettered areas to simplify its description (areas 7a–7e).

Creature: The large metal figure kneeling before the machine is the Mechanic, Kambranex's shield guardian. Through a magical process Kambranex was unable to duplicate, the shield guardian has become sentient. The Mechanic stands vigilantly before Kambranex when the PCs enter the room and commands them to halt with a deep hollow voice. If the PCs speak to the Mechanic, he responds and answers questions, but ultimately they have seen too much and he cannot let them leave unmechanized. He converses with the PCs as he casually makes his way to the desk in the center of the room. He then hits a button on the desk that locks the elevator door, trapping the PCs in the room. A PC must make a successful Spot check (DC 20) to see which button the shield guardian depressed to lock the door. Hitting the button again unlocks the door.

The Mechanic stands 8 feet tall and weighs 2,500 pounds. His black and gray features are sharp, streamlined, and expertly crafted. He bears a gray symbol of Kambranex on his chest. His head is a stylized skull with only one glowing optic lens and a grill from which his metallic voice resonates. His sharp-knuckled fists ignite with fire during combat.

Ever since Kambranex symbiotically bound himself to the lab to halt the progression of his disease, the Mechanic sees the entire lab as his charge and protects Kambranex and the lab of its own free will. The Mechanic is fanatical about his duty and does not need to eat sleep or rest. It believes that all living creatures must be mechanized.

♣ **The Mechanic, Shield Guardian:** CR 12; Large Construct (10 ft. tall); HD 15d10; hp 150; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25 (touch 10, flat-footed 24); Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (2d8+11 plus 1d6 fire, +1 flaming spiked fists) or +10 ranged (1d6 and poison, metal spike); Reach 10 ft.; SA poisoned metal projectiles, flaming fists; SQ spell storing, armor, construct, fast healing 5, shield other, guard, find master, rust protection, darkvision 120 ft.; SR 25; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 24, Dex 13, Con —, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Spot +9.

Languages: Abyssal, Common, Giant, Ignan.

SA—**Poisoned Metal Projectiles (Ex):** The Mechanic can fire a metal spike from a chamber in its right forearm as a standard action. The spike has a range increment of 30 feet. Each spike deals 1d6 points of damage, threatens a critical hit on a natural 20, and injects Large scorpion venom (Fortitude save DC 18; initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str). The

Mechanic can fire thirty spikes before its ammunition is depleted.

The Mechanic can fire a volley of up to 5 spikes at once, with a -2 penalty to the attack roll per spike fired. For example, if the Mechanic unleashes a volley of 5 spikes, the attack roll is made with a -10 penalty, but a successful attack deals 5d6 points of damage (1d6 per spike) and requires the victim to make five Fortitude saving throws!

SQ—Spell Storing (Sp): The Mechanic has a single *displacement* spell (cast at 20th level) stored within it. The shield guardian activates the *displacement* spell when protecting Kambranex or the generator.

SQ—Armor: The shield guardian's armor plating is enchanted with the special abilities of *shadow* and *silent moves*, granting it a +10 circumstance bonus to both Hide and Move Silently skill checks (already added).

SQ—Construct: Immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ—Shield Other (Sp): While the Mechanic is in the lab, it can transfer half the damage dealt to Kambranex and the generator to itself.

SQ—Guard (Ex): When the Mechanic is by Kambranex's side, all attacks against Kambranex suffer a -2 deflection penalty.

SQ—Find Master (Su): As long as they are on the same plane, the Mechanic can find Kambranex (or just the wizard's amulet, if it is removed after the Mechanic is called).

SQ—Rust Protection (Ex): The shield guardian is impervious to rust attacks.

Tactics: After locking the PCs in the room, the shield guardian activates its stored *displacement* spell and moves to protect Kambranex. If forewarned of the PCs' arrival by the half-machine salamander from area 1, it attempts to hide using the *shadow* and *silent moves* qualities built into his armor plating.

7a. Iron and Basalt Desk. This crescent-shaped desk has several buttons that control the lab. A successful Use Magic Device check (DC 15) enables one to unlock the elevator door, turn off the conveyor running from area 3 to area 5, shut down the forge in area 1, disable the transport pad in area 2, and open the cells in area 6.

◆ **Iron and Basalt Desk:** Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 25.

Trap: If any living creature touches the desk drawers without first speaking the word "Kambranex," a *shocking grasp* trap triggers. The trap can be removed with a successful *dispel magic* cast against a 15th-level wizard (Kambranex's level when he made the trap).

A rogue can detect the trap with a successful Search check (DC 26) and remove it by prying a strip of copper away from the edge of the desk with a non-metal item, which requires a successful Disable Device check (DC 23).

⚡ **Shocking Grasp Trap:** CR 3; 1d8+15 points of damage; Reflex save (DC 12) halves damage; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 23).

Treasure: The desk drawers mostly contain mundane items: blank scrolls, ink jars, and a handsomely engraved, gold-nibbed stylus (12 gp). Two *shadow walk* cards lie in a secret compartment in one drawer; finding the compartment requires a successful Search check (DC 20). The *shadow walk* cards can be used to leave the lab via area 2.

7b. Bookshelf. This bookshelf contains a few scrolls, some material components, and a few minor magic items, as well as several nonmagical tomes. The Mechanic realized Kambranex could never leave the generator and that the vast library could someday be used against him and his cause, so he destroyed all of Kambranex's spellbooks and more powerful magic items that did not deal with construct creation.

Treasure: The bookshelf holds a scroll of *unseen servant* (cast at 15th level), a scroll of *arcane lock* (cast at 15th level), a scroll of *haste* (cast at 15th level), a scroll of *minor globe of invulnerability* (cast at 12th level), a small bag containing *dust of illusion*, a *hand of the mage*, a cursed *ring of clumsiness*, enough components to assemble three spell component pouches, and a *wand of magic missile* with 43 charges (cast at 7th level).

7c. Living Generator. After contracting a wasting disease known as the Mortification while exploring the Belching Vortex of Leuk-O, Kambranex connected himself to the lab to sustain his life. For reasons unknown, his half-fiend heritage thwarted all attempts to cure the malady. When the PCs near Kambranex, they see the terrible toll the Mortification has taken on him and the intricately crafted bronze amulet around his neck bearing his personal symbol.

If the generator is destroyed or disabled, Kambranex dies and the lab shuts down. Unfortunately, that means the *shadow walk* pad (area 2) also shuts down and the PCs must leave the way they came.

◆ **Kambranex's Generator:** Hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 28; Disable Device (DC 33); electricity resistance 20, +15 inherent bonus to saves.

Trap: Damaging the generator with a melee attack causes it to discharge a surge of electricity. The attacker must make a successful Reflex save (DC 13).

for half damage; if the attacker is wielding a metal weapon, the save DC is 16.

➤ **Electrical Surge:** CR 4; 6d6 points of electricity damage; Reflex save (DC 13 or 16) halves damage; Search (n/a); Disable Device (n/a).

Treasure: The amulet Kambranex wears is worth 500 gp and was once used to control the Mechanic. It ceased to function after the shield guardian became sentient, but the Mechanic must succeed at a Will save (DC 22) to attack anyone wearing the amulet due to its bond with the item.

7d. Workshop. This workshop is where Kambranex perfected many of his techniques. Scattered among the tools, spare parts, metal limbs, and bewildering schematics are several items of value.

Treasure: PCs searching the area find a 2-foot-wide by 3-foot-long pad of vellum (21 sheets remaining) worth 42 gp; 4 vials of colored ink (black, red, violet, and green respectively) worth 80 gp total; a set of 7 technical drawing pens that grant a +2 circumstance bonus to Craft skill checks that involve drawing (worth 21 gp total); and the schematics for

HEAT, LAVA, SMOKE, AND FIRE

The adventure takes the PCs into some extremely hostile environments. Rules for running these environments are more fully covered in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* (starting on page 85). Not all of the hazards below are used in the adventure, but feel free to use them to make encounters more interesting or more challenging.

Heat

Heat deals subdual damage that cannot be recovered until the character gets cooled off. If rendered unconscious by the subdual damage, the character takes normal damage at the same rate.

Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort have a -4 penalty to their Fortitude saves to avoid subdual damage. A character with the Wilderness Lore skill can make a skill check (DC 15) once every 24 hours to gain a +2 competency bonus on his Fortitude saves and can grant the same bonus to one other character for every 1 point by which the check result exceeds 15.

Characters who sustain subdual damage from heat now suffer from heatstroke and are fatigued. Fatigued characters cannot run or charge and suffer an effective -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. A fatigued character becomes exhausted by doing something else that would normally cause fatigue. After 8 hours of complete rest, fatigued characters are no longer fatigued.

In very hot conditions (above 90°F), a character must make a Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of subdual damage. Characters reduced to unconsciousness take 1d4 points of normal damage per hour.

In extreme heat (above 110°F), a character must make a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage. Characters reduced to unconsciousness take 1d4 points of normal damage every 10 minutes.

Abysmal heat (air temperature over 140°F, fire, boiling water, lava) deals normal damage. Breathing air in these temperatures deals 1d6 points of damage per minute (no

save). In addition, a character must make a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage. Those wearing metal armor or coming into contact with very hot metal are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell.

Lava

Lava or magma deals 2d6 points of damage per round of exposure, except in the case of total immersion (such as when a character falls into the lava cauldron of Mount Smolderac), which deals 20d6 points of damage per round. Magma deals half as much damage (1d6 or 10d6 points of damage per round) for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases.

Immunity or resistance to heat or fire serves as an immunity or resistance to lava or magma. However, a creature immune to heat might still drown if completely immersed in lava.

Smoke

A character who breathes heavy smoke must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) each round or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

Smoke obscures vision, granting one-half concealment (20% miss chance) to characters within it.

Catching on Fire

Characters exposed to open flames, lava, or similar hazards must make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid catching on fire. If a character catches on fire, he immediately takes 1d6 points of damage. In each subsequent round, the character must make another Reflex save. Failure means he takes another 1d6 points of damage. Success means he is no longer on fire.

A character can jump into or douse himself with water to automatically extinguish the flames. Rolling on the ground or smothering the fire grants the character another Reflex save with a +4 circumstance bonus.

Flammable items must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) or sustain the same amount of damage as the character.

building a shield guardian (see the *Monster Manual*, page 163, for details).

Among the pile of metal limbs the PCs can assemble another toolkit like those found in area 3 and find a pair of goggles fitted with magnifying lenses. These goggles are worth 250 gp and function as goggles of *minute seeing*, but they grant only a nonmagical +2 circumstance bonus to Craft skill checks and Search checks involving intricate detail.

7e. Alchemy Lab. This collection of beakers, tubes, crucibles, and tools appears barely used. Several of the glass containers hold colored liquids. A PC who succeeds at an Alchemy check (DC 20) notices a precariously balanced filtering tube filled with a volatile chemical that explodes when exposed to air.

Trap: If a PC touches the equipment, she must make a Dexterity check (DC 15) or knock over the filtering tube filled with the volatile chemical. Everyone within 20 feet of the tube must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid the fiery blast. PCs who fail the save by 10 or more not only take damage but also are blinded for 1d6 minutes.

➔ **Chemical Blast:** CR 4; 20-foot-radius burst; 5d6 points of damage plus blindness for 1d6 minutes; Reflex save (DC 15) negates damage and blindness; Alchemy check (DC 20) to notice; Disable Device check (DC 15) to steady the equipment.

Treasure: Assuming the equipment isn't destroyed in the chemical blast, the apparatus is worth 1,000 gp and weighs 80 pounds. A Search check (DC 15) reveals two vials of alchemist's fire and three vials of acid among the common liquids.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs destroy the Mechanic, all mechanized creatures under its control become free-willed, the attacks on the Horntallow tribe cease, and the slaves in the iron mines are able to escape in the confused aftermath. If the PCs destroy the generator—consequently killing Kambranex—but do not destroy the Mechanic, they win the wrath of a formidable and tireless nemesis. The shield guardian repairs the generator, secures some other organic life form to power it, and resumes its master plan soon after. The heroes might encounter more powerful half-machine creations in the future. ☐

Rob Lee is a graphic artist by day and a freelance writer and cartographer by night. This is his second appearance in *DUNGEON Magazine*. He would like to thank Karl for not freaking out when his favorite character was forcefully mechanized during the playtest.

HALF-MACHINE TEMPLATE

Magic coupled with machinery can equip organic creatures with mechanical limbs, metallic skin, and other machine enhancements. The result is a half-machine. A half-machine can come in various shapes and sizes, depending on the base creature type and the extent of the mechanical modifications.

Most half-machine creatures are hideous to behold, while some might appear quite normal or at least aesthetically pleasing if their mechanical enhancements are lovingly crafted or well hidden. Fusions of the organic and metallic, half-machine creatures are typically shunned by society. Their builders tend to be mad wizards and sorcerers, tyrants with sophisticated technology at their disposal, and other malcontents willing and able to take living, breathing creatures and transform them into half-metal mockeries of their former selves.

CREATING A HALF-MACHINE

"Half-machine" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature") except constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, shapechangers, and undead. Creatures with this template retain their type but gain partial construct qualities. A half-machine creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted below:

Hit Dice: Increase the base creature's Hit Dice by one die type, to a maximum of d12.

Speed: There is a 25% chance that the base creature is fitted with metal wings that enable it to fly at its normal speed (average maneuverability). Different wing types are possible (bat wings, bronze feathered wings, foil butterfly wings, and so on). Base creatures already equipped with wings could have their organic wings removed and replaced with metal ones.

AC: The half-machine gains an +8 armor bonus from its mechanical limbs and exoskeleton.

Attacks: Primary weapons use the half-machine's full attack bonus, no matter how many primary weapons there are. A half-machine's attack bonus depends on its type, Hit Dice, size, and Strength modifier (for melee attacks) or Dexterity modifier (for ranged attacks). All other natural weapons are secondary. Reduce the half-machine creature's attack bonus by 5 for all secondary weapons. Creatures with the Multiattack feat suffer only a -2 penalty to secondary attacks. A half-machine threatens critical hits on a 20 unless otherwise specified.

In general, a half-machine attacks once with each primary or secondary weapon it has (this includes "natural" attacks such as claw, bite, slam, or gore as well as weapons). Half-machines that wield weapons

follow all the rules characters do, including multiple attacks with the same weapon and penalties for using two weapons at once.

Damage: If the base creature has natural attacks, use the values below or the base creature's damage, whichever is greater:

Size	Bite	Claw	Slam	Gore
Fine	—	—	1	1
Diminutive	—	1	1d2	1d2
Tiny	1	1d2	1d3	1d3
Small	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d4
Medium-size	1d3	1d4	1d6	1d6
Large	1d4	1d6	1d8	1d8
Huge	1d6	2d4	2d6	2d6
Gargantuan	1d8	2d6	2d8	2d8
Colossal	2d6	2d8	4d6	4d6

Special Attacks: A half-machine creature retains all the special attacks and qualities of the base creature. The half-machine also gains one special attack for every three character levels or HD:

Breath Weapon (Su): The half-machine of Tiny size or bigger can belch forth one of the following as a standard action once per day: cone of superheated steam, cone of fire, cone of ice, cone of sleep gas (as the *sleep* spell without the restriction on Hit Dice or number of targets), cone of sonic energy, cone of slow gas (as the *slow* spell), line of acid, or line of lightning. Breath weapons that mirror spell effects are cast at the half-machine's level or 5th-level, whichever is higher. The breath weapon's save DC is $10 + (1/2 \text{ creature's HD}) + \text{Con modifier}$.

Creature Size	Line Length*	Cone Length**	Damage
Tiny	30 ft.	15 ft.	1d6
Small	40 ft.	20 ft.	2d6
Medium-size	60 ft.	30 ft.	3d6
Large	80 ft.	40 ft.	5d6
Huge	100 ft.	50 ft.	7d6
Gargantuan	120 ft.	60 ft.	11d6
Colossal	140 ft.	70 ft.	15d6

*A line is always 5 feet high and 5 feet wide.

**A cone is as high and wide as its length.

Extra Attacks (Ex): The half-machine has 1d4 extra arms or tentacles. Each new appendage is treated as an extra secondary weapon (see Attacks above).

Increased Bite Damage (Ex): Large metal jaws add an extra die of the damage to the half-machine's bite attack. Thus, a normal bite attack dealing $2d8+12$ points of damage would deal $3d8+12$ points of damage instead. If the base creature does not have a bite attack normally, this ability gives the half-machine one normal bite attack (see Damage above).

Increased Claw Damage (Ex): Long, metal claws add an extra die of the damage to the half-machine's claw attacks. Thus, a claw attack dealing $1d6+2$ points of



damage each would deal $2d6+2$ points of damage instead. If the base creature does not have any claw attack normally, this ability gives the half-machine one normal claw attack (see Damage above).

Metal Projectiles (Ex): The half-machine can fire a metal spike, needle, or similar metallic projectile as a standard action. This attack has a range increment of 30 feet. Each projectile deals damage equal to the half-machine creature's base claw attack (with no Strength modifier; see Damage above) and threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 20. The half-machine can fire a number of projectiles equal to twice its level before its supply of ammunition is depleted.

Projectiles can be coated with Injury or Contact poison; see page 80 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* for damage and cost of various poisons.

A half-machine can have a grenadelike weapon instead of metal projectiles; these behave exactly as described on pages 114 and 138 of the *Player's Handbook* for grenadelike weapons and grenadelike weapon attack rules. The half-machine can "hurl" a number of grenadelike weapons equal to its level before its supply of ammunition is depleted.

Tail Slap (Ex): The half-machine is equipped with a lizardlike mechanical tail it can use to slap one opponent each round as a secondary attack. A tail slap deals claw damage (see above) plus $1 \frac{1}{2}$ times the half-machine's Strength bonus (round down).

A half-machine cannot have both this special attack and the Tail Spike special attack.

Tail Spike (Ex): The half-machine is equipped with a scorpionlike mechanical tail with which it can

sting one opponent each round as a secondary attack. The stinger deals claw damage (see above) with no Strength modifier and holds enough Injury-type poison for one injection per level of the half-machine; see page 80 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* for damage and cost of various poisons.

A half-machine cannot have both this special attack and the Tail Slap special attack.

Special Qualities: A half-machine has all the special qualities of the base creature plus the following:

Partial Construct (Ex): A half-machine is immune to poison and disease and is considered one size larger when determining death from massive damage. (Colossal half-machines are not subject to death from massive damage.) A half-machine is subject to critical hits but takes only half damage from subdual attacks. It can be healed with a successful Craft (metalworking) check as with the standard Heal check. A slain half-machine that is resurrected returns to life as the base creature it was before undergoing mechanical alteration.

Half-machines get a +4 resistance bonus to mind-affecting attacks and effects.

Programmed (Su): The half-machine is programmed to completely obey its creator as if under the effects of a *dominate monster* spell cast by a 20th-level wizard. If the creator dies or is destroyed, the half-machine becomes free-willed, but the residual program gives the half-machine a -4 penalty to Will saves against Enchantment spells (unless it has the Shielded Mind special quality, described below). The programming can be erased only with a *wish* or similar spell.

Rust Vulnerability (Ex): All half-machines (save those with the Rust Protection special quality, described below) are affected by rust attacks, such as that of the rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

Additional Special Qualities: A half-machine gains one the following additional special qualities for every 3 character levels or HD:

Damage Reduction (Ex): The half-machine has damage reduction commensurate with its size: 5/+1 (Tiny or smaller), 10/+1 (Small, Medium-size, Large), 20/+2 (Huge, Gargantuan), 30/+3 (Colossal).

Darkvision (Ex): Mechanized implants give the half-machine darkvision at a range 60 feet. If the base creature already has darkvision, it gains an extra 60 feet to its range.

Energy Resistance (Su): The half-machine has acid, cold, fire, electricity or sonic resistance 10 (choose one). This can be chosen multiple times to give the half-machine more than one type of resistance or to increase the amount of resistance to a particular type. For instance, a half-machine could have acid resistance 10 and electricity resistance 10, or electricity resistance 20.

Enhanced Scent (Ex): The half-machine's implants give it the Scent ability (see *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, page 81). If the base creature already has the Scent ability, the half-machine gains a +10 competence bonus when tracking by scent.

Haste (Sp): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, the half-machine can *haste* itself once per day as a standard action. The effect is the same as the *haste* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer.

Improved Invisibility (Sp): The half-machine can, as a standard action, bend light around its body. The effect is otherwise the same as the *improved invisibility* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer.

Rust Protection (Ex): The half-machine is impervious to rust attacks (this counters Rust Vulnerability above).

Shielded Mind (Su): The half-machine is immune to mind-affecting attacks.

Spell Resistance (Su): The half-machine gains spell resistance equal to twice its Hit Dice, to a maximum of SR 25.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +0, Con +4, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0.

Skills: Due to its mechanical implants and modifications, a half-machine receives a +8 competence bonus to any two of the following skills: Climb, Intimidate, Listen, Search, Spot, Swim. Otherwise same as the base creature.

Feats: A half-machine gains any four of the following feats, assuming the base creature doesn't already have them: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Run, Toughness (can be taken multiple times), Track.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or gang (2-5)

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +3

Treasure: Same as the base creature

Alignment: Same as base creature

Advancement: Same as base creature

SAMPLE HALF-MACHINE

This example uses a gray render as the base creature.

Half-Machine Gray Render

Large Beast

Hit Dice: 10d12+90 (153 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

AC: 27 (-1 size, +10 natural, +8 armor)

Attacks: Bite +14 melee, 2 claws +12 melee,
1 tail +12 melee

Damage: Bite 3d6+8, claw 1d6+4,
tail 1d6 plus poison

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab, rend 3d6+12, breath weapon, increased bite damage, tail spike

Special Qualities: Scent, partial construct, programmed, rust vulnerability, electricity resistance 10, *haste*, shielded mind

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +9, Will +4

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +7, Spot +8*

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

Climate/Terrain: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: 11–15 HD (Large); 16–30 HD (Huge)

This particular half-machine gray render is fitted with metal bat wings that allow it to fly. Its programming makes it an effective and subservient body-guard.

Combat

Half-machine gray renders are aggressive and lust for battle. They enjoy tearing their foes limb from limb and find no greater pleasure than slaughtering the weak.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the half-machine gray render must hit with its bite attack.

Rend (Ex): A half-machine gray render that gets a hold latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh, dealing 3d6+12 points of damage.

Breath Weapon (Su): Line of acid, 80 feet, once per day; damage 5d6, Reflex save half (DC 24).

Increased Bite Damage (Ex): The creature's bite deals 3d6+8 points of damage (instead of 2d6+8 points).

Tail Spike (Ex): Purple worm poison, 10 doses: initial 1d6 Str, secondary 1d6 Str, Fortitude save resists (DC 24).

Haste (Sp): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, the half-machine gray render can haste itself once per day as a standard action. The effect is the same as the *haste* spell cast by a 10th-level sorcerer.

Shielded Mind (Su): The half-machine gray render is immune to mind-affecting attacks.

***Skills:** The half-machine gray render receives a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks due to its six keen eyes. Due to mechanical implants that enhance its senses, it receives a +8 competence bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

DUNGEON #92

Previews



INTERLOPERS OF RUUN-KHAZAI

by David Noonan

An ancient githyanki fortress might not be as abandoned as everyone thinks. A D&D adventure tied with the release of the much-anticipated *Stronghold Builder's Guidebook*.

MOBY DRUID

by James Jacobs

The companion of a long-dead guardian of nature has returned seeking revenge on those who were responsible for her death. This 20th-level D&D adventure is the perfect prelude for the forthcoming *Epic Level Handbook*.

THE SWARM

by Tito Leati

A dwarven expedition is determined to reclaim the mine of their ancestors. Unfortunately, the current inhabitants have a bone to pick with the dwarves and anyone helping them. This 1st-level D&D adventure is linked to a new line of novels.

PLUS A NEW ISSUE OF POLYHEDRON!

REGARDING GUNS

DUNGEON #89 was a good buy. "Honor and Eta" was fairly good, but I would have liked the tengu encounter to be a little meatier. They show up, duel, and take flight? They can be much cooler than that. That encounter had nothing to do with the story.

As for "Headless," wow, that was a good adventure. Kudos to the author and the artist. I just loved the setting and all the visual elements that make up the adventure. Nightmares in snowy mountains—very good imagery! The derro antagonist was superb. I will not let her die in my game; she is way to sexy! I am working on expanding this adventure to a full campaign that includes the entire background as playable time. The background in this adventure was one of the best parts of the read. I want my PCs to live it. Bravo!

In regards to the letter "Concerned and Curious," I would like to see a futuristic adventure in DUNGEON. I believe DRAGON had a Steampunk issue a few months back [DRAGON #277—Ed.]. Give us some more! The writer from Hawaii wanted firearms and future and so do I!

Mad Matt Ward
Via Email

Although DUNGEON will never go totally sci-fi, we don't object to a little crossing of streams. Hence this issue's "Kambranex's Machinations." Check it out on page 86.

BEST EPISODE EVER

I'm just in the middle of reading #90. What can I say? Wow! Issue #90 is probably the best I've seen in the couple of years I've read DUNGEON. Although that high-level, save-the-world-from-the-drow adventure about a year back was equally impressive. In particular, I liked "Tears for Twilight Hollow," which was more complete and better developed than some of the modules I own from previous editions. The constructs were original and just cool. A few years ago, I played in a campaign in which the party rode through dungeons in an enchanted, animated sarcophagus, and I'm both intrigued and slightly terrified at what my players (some of whom are veterans of that campaign) will do when they get hold of a technomagic beholder. . . .

Also good was the short adventure "Prey for Tyrinth"—a nice little dungeoncrawl in an original setting, with lots of different ways to encounter the monsters. I've used DUNGEON adventures in different campaigns several times in the past, and these two are on my short list.

I'd also like to say that although I've only glanced through POLYHEDRON so far, I do like its inclusion with DUNGEON. I've often thought an Indiana-Jones-style campaign would be kinda cool, and *Pulp Heroes* seems a good place to start.

In response to a couple of the letters printed in Issue #90, I'm all in favor of using tokens instead of—or better yet, alongside—miniatures. Tokens as mounts for 3-D PCs is a good idea, one I hadn't thought of. But might I suggest a way Mr. Adkison could develop his own dungeon dressing, spell effect templates, and so on. For dungeon dressing, I personally pilfer furniture from my old "HeroQuest" set, though I agree tokens might be useful for tables, bookshelves, and the like. For templates, Games Workshop produces both card and plastic templates for use with their games in a variety of sizes and shapes useable for D&D spell effects.

For a cheap, personal, and versatile option, I make spell templates, and even rooms and corridors, on my computer. A number of programs exist to facilitate this. My preference is *Microsoft Publisher*. It allows for any sort of shape you could want (with a little practice) and you can mark templates with multicolored patterns to mark different sorts of spell effects. Rooms can be drawn, floors given unique fill patterns, and grid lines added in convenient colors. You do up a page of spell effects, for example, print them, and you've got tokens ready to cut out and glue onto a card. Hex grids are a little trickier, but possible, and for these there's always *Profantasy's Campaign Cartographer* and its addons, which are set up to do hex maps.

In response to Ms. Graham's letter, I appreciate that non-Realms players might feel the amount of FORGOTTEN REALMS' content limits the amount of space available for their favorite campaign. I might be biased, being a Realms guy myself, but I think the Realms is an easier campaign to convert from than anything else. Often I've read through a GREYHAWK adventure and come across a cleric's stats, checked out his deity in the *Player's Handbook*, and thought, "Hmmm . . . bits of this apply to about five different gods in the Realms; which works best?". Campaigns in which deities have broader portfolios make it easy to choose the right one for each character.

More importantly though, I'd encourage readers who don't see enough of their favorite campaign setting to send more of it in; DUNGEON generally has 3–4 full adventures, a Side Trek, a "Map of Mystery," and now a "Critical Threat." There's no reason that can't include adventures from GREYHAWK, the FORGOTTEN REALMS, DRAGONLANCE, and DARK SUN; a Side Trek through a marketplace in AL-QADIM or an *Oriental Adventures* monastery; and a map for a haunted castle in RAVENLOFT. The d20 system is about versatility, right?

Finally, the art is great as always—I always enjoy Brom's work—and I like the little epigrammatic quotes on the "Table of Contents." They set the mood for the issue. Keep up the good work.

Rick Kimberley
Toronto, ON

PLANAR PERILS

So you wait a little bit after the *Manual of the Planes* was released before you bombard us with massive amounts of ideas for adventures. I understand that. Planeshopping is a delicate process. Proceeding with caution is an appropriate first step. But now I'm ready. Let loose the scourge of the planes on us! The multiverse is getting boring without you.

Seriously, that's the one thing I've seen *DUNGEON* lack in since the *Manual of the Planes* came out. Please lend a helping hand to some of the post-PLANESCAPE fanatics out there who still want to roll with the Lady of Pain.

William Bryan
Portland, OR

You'll be happy to know that an adventure in Issue #92 will deal prominently with the planes, while remaining playable to those who don't use the Manual of the Planes. DUNGEON is also always in the market for more planar adventures, so send in your proposals today!

PLAYTESTER FEEDBACK?

I have a suggestion to make concerning your excellent magazine I have read since the first issue.

I read in the adventure "Glacier Season" (Issue #87) that you implemented ideas the playtesters had for breaking into the white dragon's stronghold.

I think it would be a good idea to know how the players acted in an adventure while they were playtesting it. Why don't you add a small chapter in every scenario about the strategy followed by playtesters: how they act during the adventure, if some of them died and how, what strategy did they follow to enter the main place, to kill the bad guy, or

to deal with an important NPC. It would be a short digest of the game session with the most significant actions.

It could be fun and useful for DMs who want to anticipate actions of their own players.

Francois Pierre
Via Email

There are two reasons we don't print all our playtesters feedback in the issue: First, that information is incorporated into the finished product you receive when you buy the magazine. So in essence, we're already including the playtesters comments. Second, we'd rather devote page space to the adventures themselves.

LOVIN' IT ALL

I've been buying or subscribing to *DUNGEON* since around Issue #11, and I wanted to write in and congratulate you on the quality of this product. *DUNGEON* has always been a useful part of my gaming experience, but in the last year or so I have been doubly impressed with the excellent adventures, presentation, and editing that has gone into this magazine. Every author, editor, and staff member should be proud.

Specifically, the "Maps of Mystery" and the "Critical Threats" are really outstanding additions to the magazine. Any DM who likes to write a little and reuse a lot (like me) can get just enough assistance and inspiration from gems like those.

Also, I'm not one who complains when alternative settings or game systems are included. An *ALTERNITY*, *RAVENLOFT*, *DARK*MATTER*, *MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH*, or another such adventure is a welcome change. I look forward to seeing something a little different or unique in each issue.

I don't have any complaints (this has become quite a suck-up letter), but I do want to recognize the *Oriental Adventure* in Issue #90 ("Honor and Eta"). It is excellent; this is one setting I'd love to see appear in the pages of *DUNGEON* on a regular basis.

Shana Bertram
Memphis, TN

THANKS TO OUR PLAYTESTERS

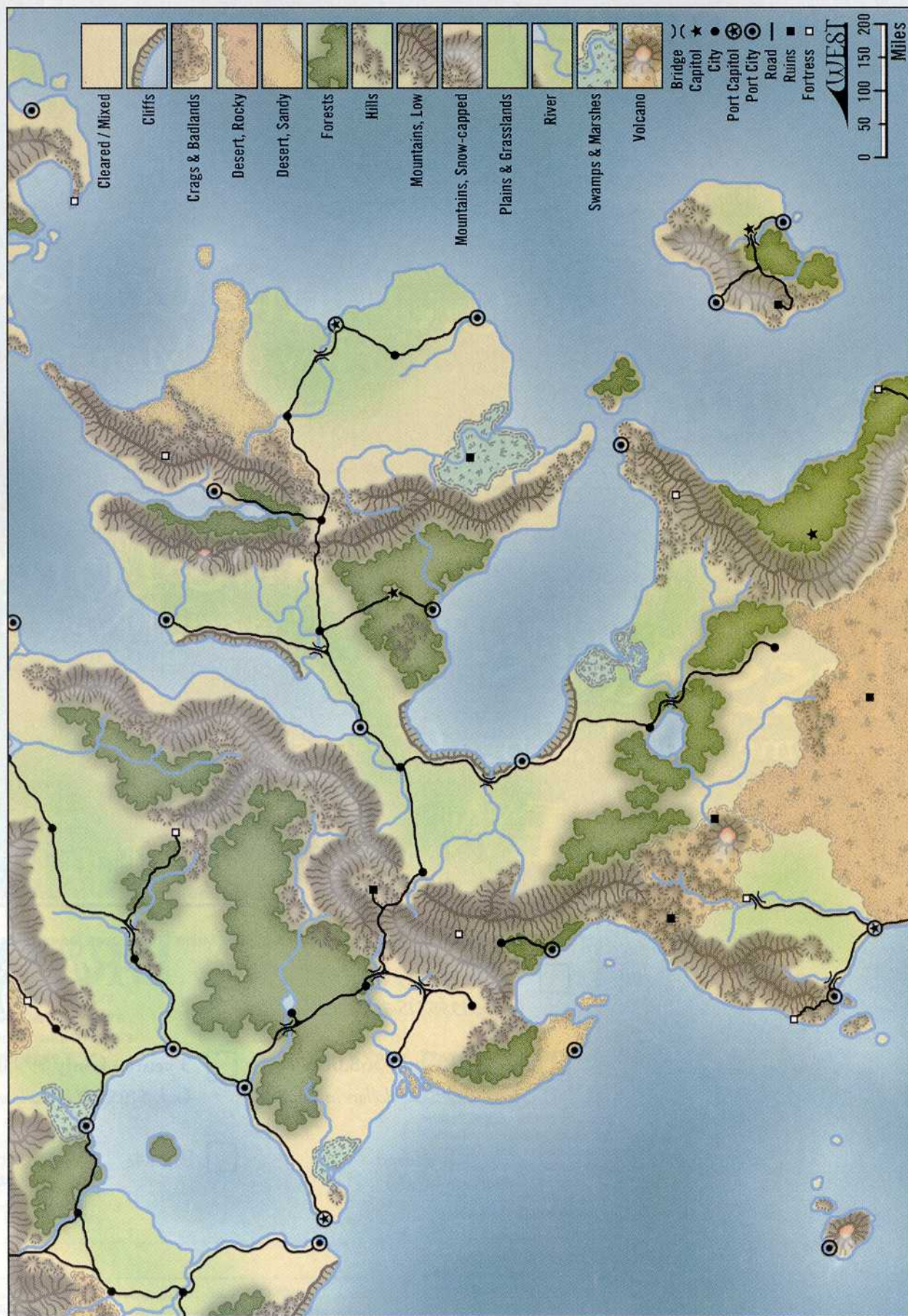
This issue, we'd like to thank playtesters from Issues #90 and #91.

Ken Che
Renee Hubert
Omar Muñoz

Erik Mona
Jesse Decker
Carl Greer

Johnny Wilson
Stacie Fiorito
Matthew Sernett

If you'd like to be a playtester, send a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope to us at *DUNGEON Magazine*, 1801 Lind Ave. SW, Renton, WA 98055, along with a description of the type of adventure you'd like to playtest (level, campaign setting, and so on).



MONSTER TOKENS—SET #5

Dungeon

Sometimes it is easier to play out D&D battles using miniatures on a battle mat. If you do not collect miniatures, you can use these tokens to represent monsters. All of the monsters below are from adventures appearing in this issue. To use, cut carefully along the dotted lines. When a monster is slain, flip over the token. Color photocopy this page to make multiple monsters of the same type. Permission is granted to photocopy these monster tokens for home game use only.



Assassin Vine



Choker



Devourer



Doppelganger



Troll



Ettreap



Ghost



Ghoul



Hill Giant



Wrath



Orc



Orc



Naga



Rast



Skeleton



Skeleton



Carion Crawler



Shambling Mound



Wight



Huge Red Dragon



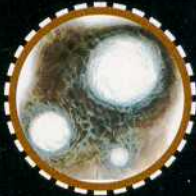
Shadow



Shadow



Green Hag



Will-o'-wisp



Green Hag



Xill



Huge Shambling Mound

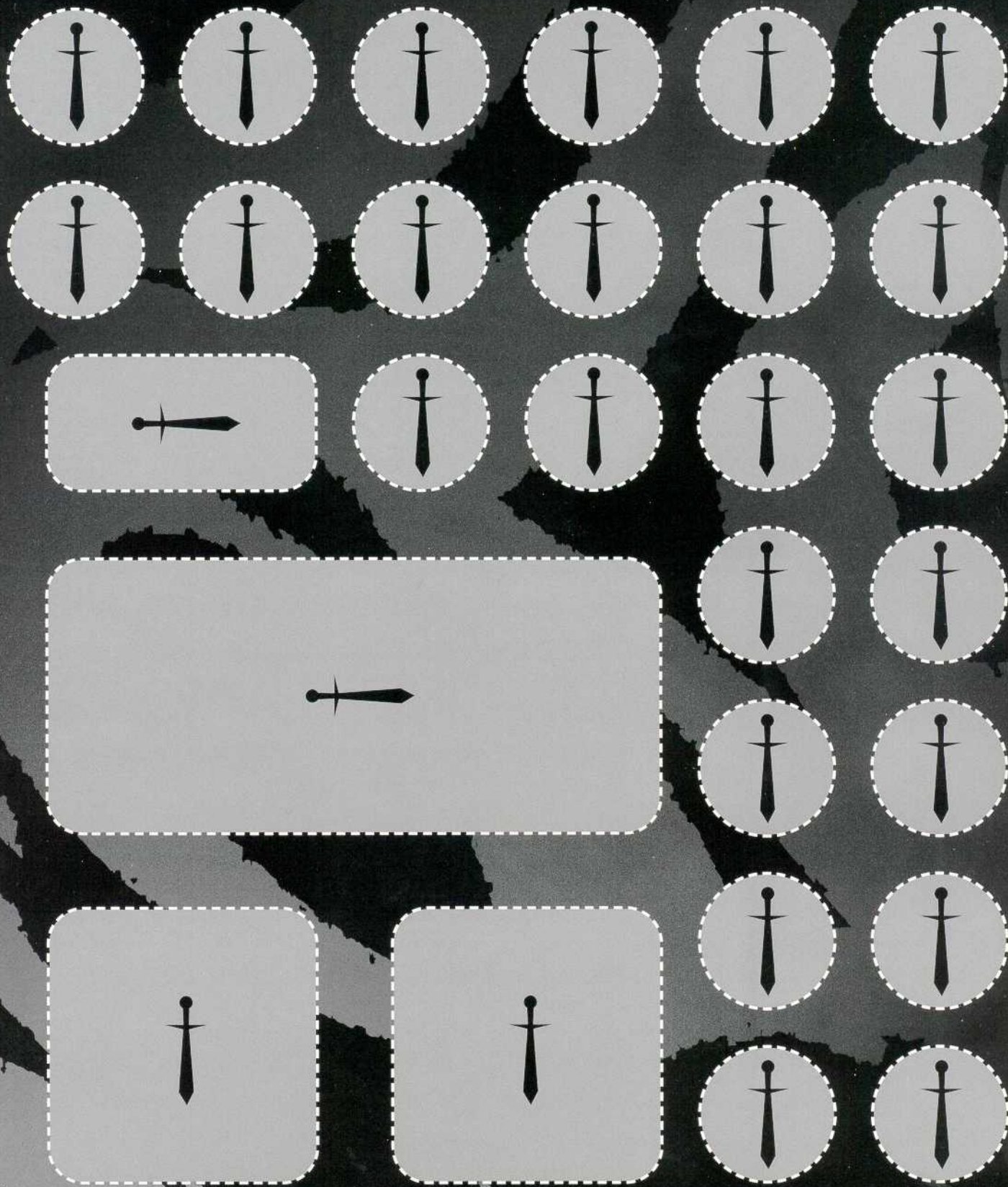


Gelatinous Cube

Credits

Monster Manual Artwork by Glen Angus, Carlo Arellano, Carl Critchlow, Michael Kaluta, Scott Fischer, Todd Lockwood, David Martin, Matthew Mitchell, Wayne Reynolds, Brian Snoddy, Anthony Waters, and Sam Wood.
Monster Manual Art Direction by Dawn Murin. Additional art by Richard Sardinha.

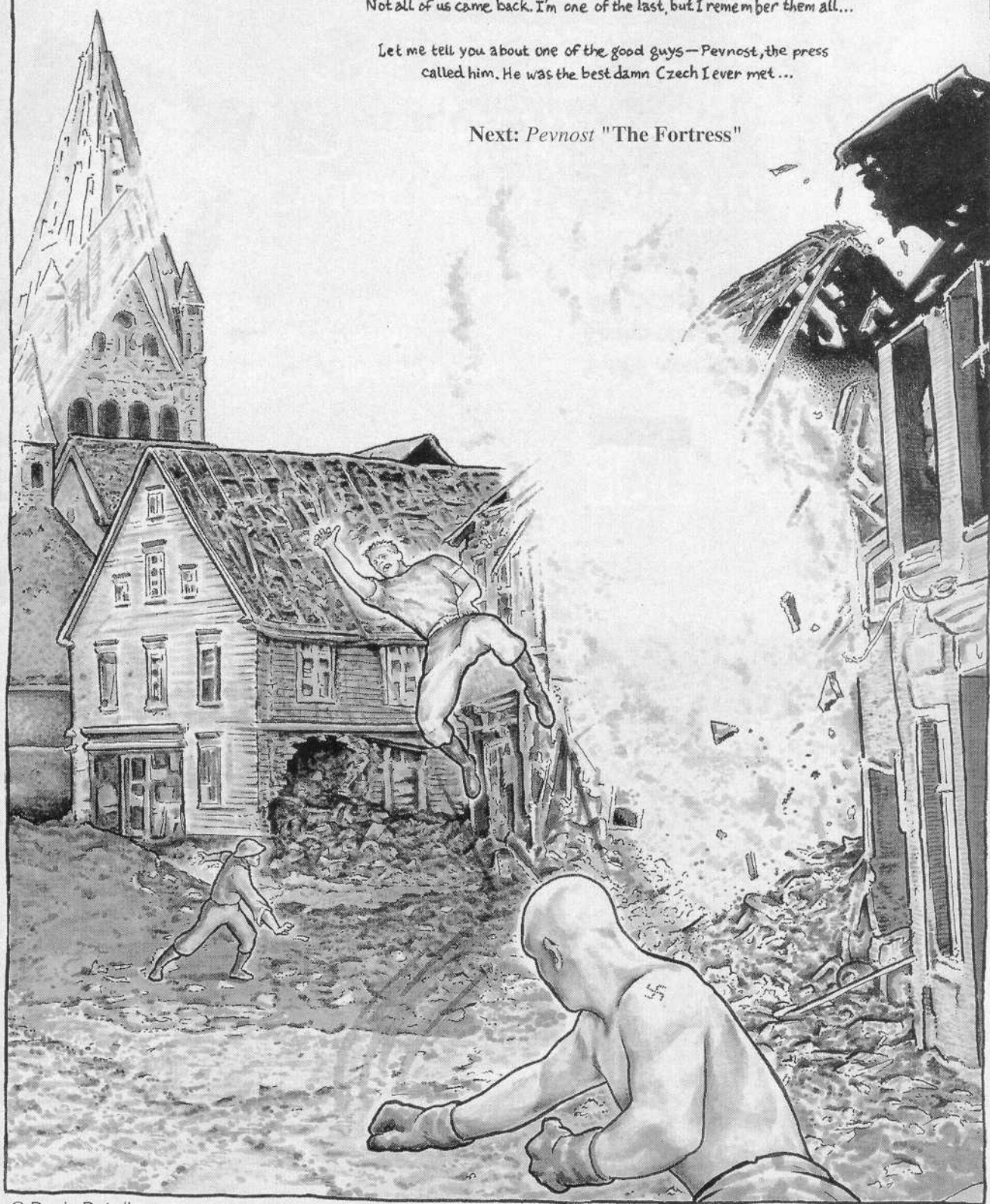
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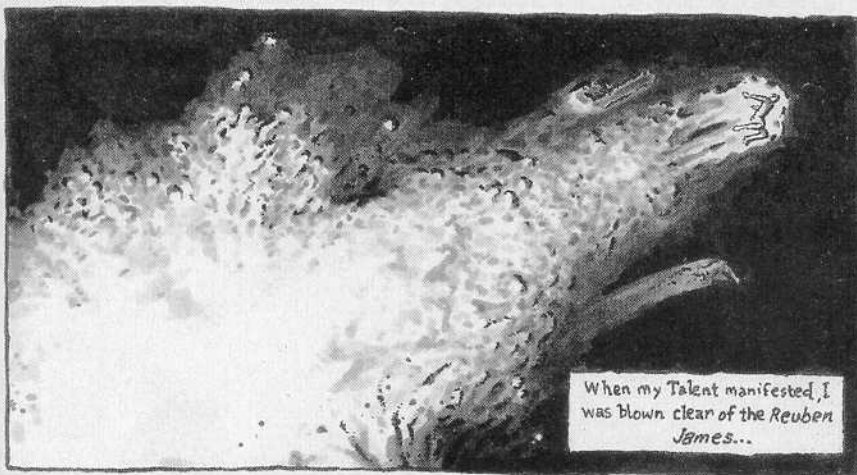


We busted up a whole hell of a lot of towns in Europe, me and the others. We faced the best the Nazis could send—Krieg, Der Flieger, Der Tragheit. Not all of us came back. I'm one of the last, but I remember them all...

Let me tell you about one of the good guys—Pevnost, the press called him. He was the best damn Czech I ever met...

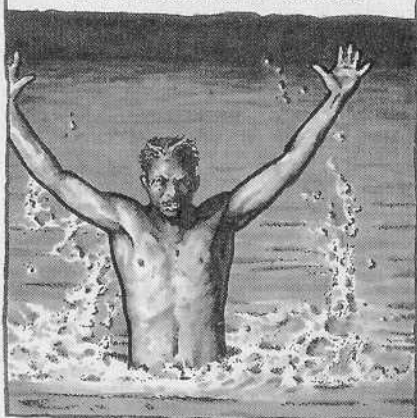
Next: *Pevnost* "The Fortress"



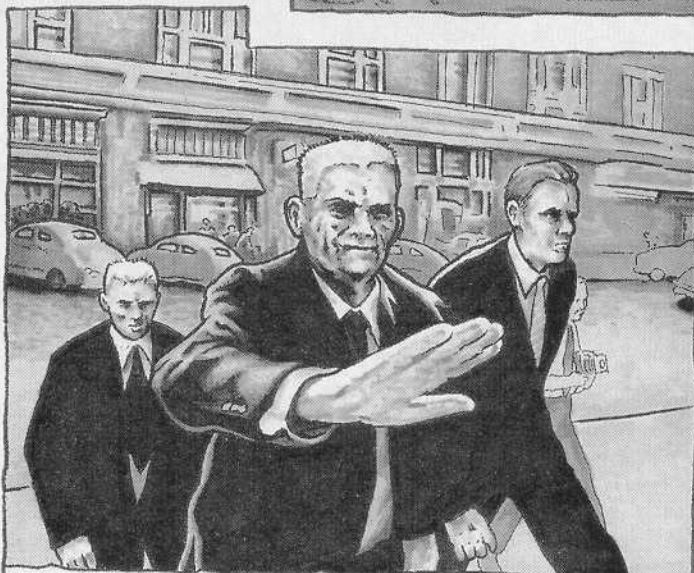
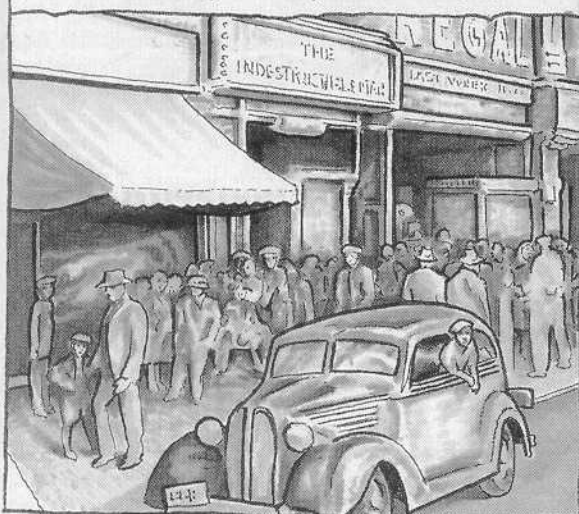


When my Talent manifested, I was blown clean of the Reuben James...

I was Indestructible. Nothing could hurt me. Fire, water, starvation. I was the first American super-man. Roosevelt called me "Godlike."

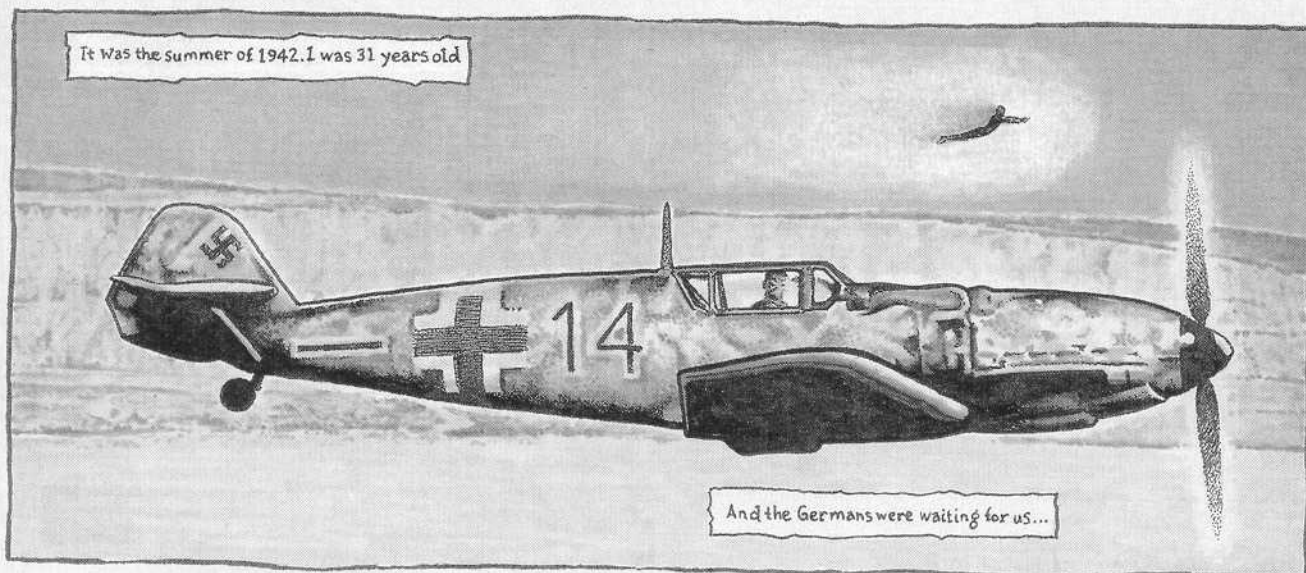


I was rushed home and pushed to my limits by Section Two, the American agency set up to study the foreign Super-men. Newsreels of me shrugging off Howitzer rounds were playing to packed crowds all over the country—still, no one even knew my name. At the time the Brits had dozens of Talents and the Germans hundreds, but I was the only American, for a little while at least.



There were hearings before the Joint Chiefs of Staff to see where I would be most useful. Suddenly, I was in the Army, and after nine months of Commando training in England, me and a half dozen American Talents were ready to take the war to Europe.

It was the summer of 1942. I was 31 years old



And the Germans were waiting for us...

Begin anywhere? Well, alright. I was born in Booth Virginia in 1911. My dad died when I was 22 and I left, I had enough of the mines, so I left for good. I wasn't indestructible then y'understand. I was just a normal joe. I became an Ensign in the U.S. Navy in 1935, and I was damn happy. Things were looking up...

But of course...that was before the war.

It all seems so long ago now...

When the war in Europe exploded, I was in the thick of it, on the *Reuben James*, running convoy duty in the North Atlantic. We weren't in it yet, us Americans, but war was coming. It was on the third run to England when it happened.

Me and Mike Rutherford was on watch. It was October 31— Halloween 1941...Doesn't that beat all? Anyway, Mike saw the torpedo first. We both knew we was in for it. The Germans were firing on anything heading to England at the time. I thought I was dead.

Mike lit a cigarette and said "see you around, Lloyd. I'll never forget that..."

Not a scratch on me...

GODLIKE

There Were Giants in Those Days... Part One: The Indestructible Man...

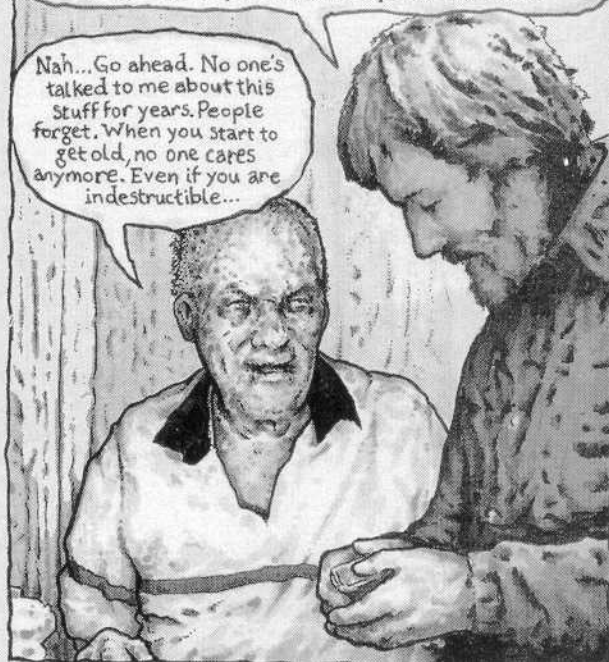
Now mind you, I'm not sayin' it didn't hurt... But it turned out I was really 'Indestructible' after all. 20-megatons and nothing. Walked right out of it. Not even any radiation on me either; my Talent took care of it all... That was in, hm... '51, after the war. We was showin' off. Trying to give the Reds something to think...



Listen to me go on... Me and my big mouth. You're here about the others, right? The Talents from the war?

I'm also here to learn some more about you, Mr. Moreland, and to get your insights into the paranormals who fought in the war, yes. The book deals with all the Allied Talents in the war. Do you mind if I tape our interview?

Nah... Go ahead. No one's talked to me about this stuff for years. People forget. When you start to get old, no one cares anymore. Even if you are indestructible...



stop at nothing to destroy them. At the very least, the heroes must be silenced before they spill too many details about what they encountered. At worst, they are now opponents that Falcone must eliminate before they disrupt his activities to a greater extent.

The Second Encounter with Shadow

The heroes might have temporarily stopped the zombies (whether or not they actually managed to keep Carlos Fuentes from getting killed), but the threat hasn't been neutralized. Because the bodies wound up disappearing from the scene (after they were so obviously long dead), or thanks to a call that comes later to say that the bodies have been stolen from the morgue, the heroes eventually determine that the zombies can't just be defeated using conventional violence. Part of this portion of the adventure should be devoted to some amount of research to determine what might stop these undead monsters permanently.

These particular zombies have a fatal weakness. Through research the heroes might learn that some zombies must be consumed by fire to destroy while others must be bathed in holy water. Some require that their head be removed and buried in a separate grave. These zombies, however, must receive a critical attack to the head that disintegrates what's left of their brains. A gun or a club can accomplish this once the heroes are aware that this is the weakness. Then they either have to score a critical hit or reduce a zombie to 0 vitality points and then deliver an extra attack to destroy the monster's brain.

At some point Falcone sends a few of his living thugs to look up the heroes. The thugs might threaten the heroes, but they're really just doing some legwork for their boss. Once the crime lord knows where to find the heroes, he puts in the call to his Shadow ally and the zombies shamle over to pay a visit. If possible, this scene works best if the heroes are all in the same place. If that

can't be easily arranged, having each hero face off against a zombie could be a great inducement to get them to join forces. There's strength in numbers, after all.

However it plays out, either one group encounter or a number of individual meetings, the heroes face off against the zombies again. This time, by design or accident, they discover how to take a zombie down and make it stay that way. Falcone, of course, has a habit of keeping his hands clean throughout all of this. The heroes won't be able to go after him directly, not unless they want to deal with the ramifications of taking the law into their own hands (something that doesn't come up that much when dealing just with the denizens of Shadow but gets in the way all the time with human enemies). They can, however, go after the source of the zombies. A little more research on the part of the heroes turns up a chain of funeral homes owned by Falcone. The Strahd Mortuary has a number of locations, including one that's just a block away from where the bus was attacked. Once the heroes work this out (and survive another encounter with the zombies), you can move on to the final encounter.

The Final Encounter with Shadow

The climax of this first adventure takes place at the Strahd Mortuary. A wing of this funeral home is devoted to Falcone's growing army of zombies. Every one of his men that falls in the line of duty or otherwise bites the dust is shipped to this location for "processing." Armand Strahd (male human Expert 3; Profession (mortician) +6; V10, W8) prepares the bodies according to the strict directions provided by Falcone's mysterious Shadow ally. Currently, he has 12 bodies undergoing the process, and there are four zombies active and ready to defend the mortuary. In addition to the four zombies, Strahd has a single living thug (male human Warrior 1; Beretta 92F pistol; V8, W10) to assist him.

The heroes can approach the funeral home when it appears to

be quiet and deserted. They might discover the large preparation room where the bodies of Falcone's slain thugs are undergoing the spells and alchemistic treatments that will turn them into zombie soldiers for his criminal cause. Each body, once prepared (and half of them have completed this part of the process), is buried beneath the soil that fills the center of the room in what appears to be an indoor garden of some sort.

They won't necessarily notice two of the four active zombies that stand or lay motionless around the side of the room until called upon to defend the funeral home. The other two active zombies are buried within the soil, undergoing a period of rejuvenation. Once the heroes announce their presence in some way, the two zombies around the side of the room attack. In the second round, the two buried zombies emerge from their graves to join the battle. In the third round, Strahd and his thug enter to help put an end to the heroes.

In the end, the heroes need to destroy each zombie (even the still-developing ones) by the prescribed method. The thug may or may not be killed in the fight; he'll surrender if the fight isn't going his way and he suffers any wound damage. Strahd fights to the death, though he could return as some undead creature to plague the heroes at a later date.

Ending the First Adventure

By the end of the first adventure, the heroes should be firmly committed to their roles as Shadow Chasers. The menace of the zombie hit-men should be neutralized, and the heroes should realize that they have an enemy in Obadiah Falcone—an enemy with some mysterious ties to Shadow.

That's it! These are the basics you need to start up a *Shadow Chasers* campaign. Watch for the *D20 Modern Roleplaying Game* later this year. It will provide more complete rules and advice for expanding the scope of your heroic horror campaign. Until then, be wary of the shadows...

The heroes are about to have their first meeting with Shadow, and it should be as life-changing an experience as you can muster.

of Shadow. Using this alliance, Falcone has ordered that some of his key enemies be destroyed—both as a business decision and as a test of the abilities of his new ally.

The ally, a mysterious being with ties to Shadow (we leave it to you to create this unseen background character for continued use in your campaign), has reanimated some of Falcone's thugs and turned them into zombies. As the heroes work through the intricacies of the plot, they can at some point identify the dead men as deceased or reportedly missing members of Falcone's organization. Or, if they come at it from another angle, the heroes can determine that each target of a zombie attack has had negative dealings with Falcone or one of his various companies.

The action for the rest of this encounter revolves around the zombies invading the bus to get at Carlos Fuentes—though they don't care who else they kill along the way. If you have four 1st-level heroes, throw two medium zombies at them (as detailed in the *Monster Manual*). Scale up the number of zombies accordingly, using the guidelines in the *Monster Manual* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The goals of this encounter are for the heroes to survive the battle with the zombies; to have their first collision with the intrusion of Shadow; and to save Fuentes if at all possible.

As the heroes get involved in the ensuing fray, they first see the zombies as hulking, shambling bums of some kind. Lighting on the bus is dim and uneven at best after the crash, and the streetlights outside are few and far between. As the battle unfolds, the heroes begin to catch glimpses of the strange attributes the attackers possess. They briefly see a decaying arm

surrounded by dirty, tattered clothing. A foul odor surrounds the attackers, something that smells ripe and rotting. At various moments, they spot a bit of bone peaking through a nasty hole in one of the attacker's bodies. And, every so often, a piece of dusty flesh slides away into one of the hero's hands or drops to the ground with a dry, disturbing plop. If the heroes manage to reduce the zombies to 0 vitality points, the creatures collapse in a dead heap and the encounter seems to come to an end.

Of course, because the heroes haven't destroyed the zombies using the method of their final destruction, the monsters will rise later, return to their master, then once again seek out the objective their master has infused into their undead existence. The heroes might notice that the dead bodies lay sprawled on the floor of the bus one moment and have disappeared the next, or the zombies might rise and wander away after the heroes have left the scene or after the bodies have been removed by the local authorities. In the end, the heroes have survived their first encounter with Shadow, and their world will never be the same.

Interlude: Becoming Shadow Chasers

How do your heroes go from innocent bystanders to concerned monster hunters? That depends on the campaign model you wish to emulate.

In a **Chosen One** campaign, for instance, this is the moment for someone to step forward and explain that Shadow has intruded upon our world and a champion has been chosen to defend us. The heroes have been bound by the horror they have witnessed, and so are called to work together to defend our world from the evil from beyond. The bearer

of these tidings might be a seemingly crazed homeless woman, or a mysterious child who appears to fade into and out of existence whenever some Shadow-related news must be conveyed to the heroes. It might be an indistinct stranger who refuses to reveal too much at any given time, or it could be one of the passengers, grievously injured by the zombies, who seems to speak with someone else's voice to pass on the mission before succumbing to the wounds and dying. The heroes might not completely believe what has been placed before them, but at least they have a context to put it in as more strange events occur later in the adventure.

In a **Special Unit** campaign, the heroes might now be approached by whatever authority you plan to use for dealing with Shadow incursions and offered positions in the division. Or you might want to start them out as agents or officers of some kind who then get recruited after dealing with the zombie attack on the bus.

In a **Private Investigators** campaign, one of the heroes (perhaps someone who selected the Awareness feat) has always suspected the existence of Shadow creatures. With this encounter, that belief is solidified. This hero should encourage the others to join up to, at the very least, investigate such situations. There's knowledge and profit to be earned, and it's probably the right thing to do. (With great power comes great responsibility, and all that.)

However you and the players decide to get them to the next stage of belief in the denizens of Shadow and their place in the unfolding battle, there's one final piece to throw into the mix. Now that the heroes have made themselves known (by defeating the zombies), Falcone and his ally will

loose. The truth is even more terrible, and it might take a good bit of research and investigation before the heroes discover the gargoyle nests and can confront the monsters in their lair.

High-Level Hook

People in the city die in their sleep all the time, but when someone close to the heroes begins to suffer from a debilitating illness and is haunted by disturbing nightmares, it can only be the work of some foul denizen of Shadow. The heroes must investigate the possible causes for the infliction and work to find a cure before the friend succumbs. Each dawn, the night's torments leave the friend with one less point of Constitution. When the friend's Constitution drops to 0, the friend will die, so the heroes have a definite deadline to work against.

The monster in this hook is a night hag, an evil outsider intent on devouring the flesh and souls of any innocents it encounters. This powerful monster carries a heartstone somewhere upon its person. When the heroes discover what they are dealing with and track it to its lair, they must then find and remove the heartstone from the night hag. Only then can they temporarily trap it in the physical world and utterly destroy it. And, hopefully, they can accomplish this before their friend dies.

Shadows Revealed

Here's a short introductory adventure that you can use to start your *Shadow Chasers* campaign. Feel free to make whatever adjustments you deem necessary to better serve your ideas and your players.

First Encounter with Shadow

The heroes don't start out as total believers in the Things of Shadow. They need to experience an event that triggers their understanding of the true dangers that lurk in the dark places of the world. Whether the heroes know each other prior to the start of the adventure or you decide to

let them meet here, the action begins late at night, on a fairly deserted bus, traveling through a mostly empty part of the city. Other than the heroes, the bus driver, and a couple of other passengers, the vehicle is empty. That strange quiet that settles over things in the hours prior to dawn fills the dimly lit bus, and each passenger is lost in his or her own thoughts. Some might even be sleeping.

Everything is fine until the bus's breaks suddenly squeal and the driver throws the wheel hard to the right. The bus slides at a weird angle, threatening to tip over onto its side. Before that happens, however, the bus slams into a light pole and stops moving with a jarring impact that tosses the passengers around like dice in a jar. Have the heroes make Reflex saves (DC 15) to see if they got hurt in the crash. A successful save indicates that the character wasn't hurt, but he or she was shaken by the collision. A failed save indicates that the character takes

some vitality damage from the impact (1d4 points). If a hero rolls a natural 1 on the saving

throw, the character suffers 1 point of wound damage.

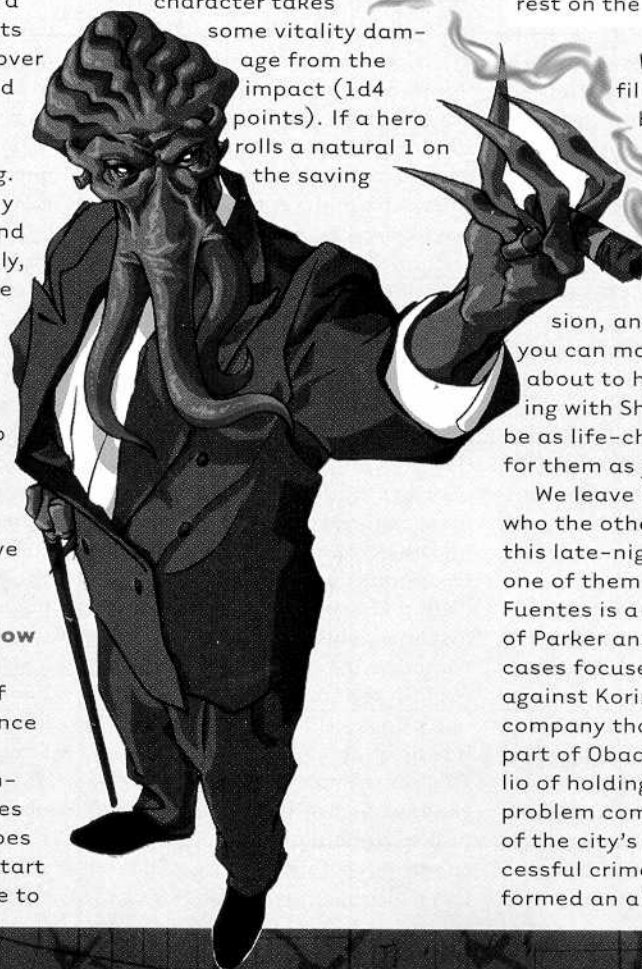
As the heroes and the other passengers pick themselves up off the floor of the bus, read the following:

In the quiet following the crash, all you can hear are the sobs and other sounds of surprise and pain that rise from the other passengers like steam on a winter's day. The bus driver, his face covered in blood from a nasty gash on his forehead, stands at the front of the bus and calls, "Is everyone all right? There were some guys just standing in the middle of the road. I didn't see them 'til I was almost on top of them. Sweet Mary, I hope I didn't hit any of—"

Before the driver can finish his sentence, the windshield explodes, spraying slivers of safety glass toward the back of the bus. Something reaches in through the broken windshield and snatches the driver away before the last shards of glass come to rest on the floor of the bus.

What's going on? We'll fill you in, but remember to keep the heroes in the dark for as long as possible. This opening encounter should be filled with as much suspense, tension, and growing terror as you can manage. The heroes are about to have their first meeting with Shadow, and it should be as life-changing an experience for them as you can muster.

We leave it to you to determine who the other passengers riding this late-night bus might be, but one of them is Carlos Fuentes. Fuentes is a lawyer with the firm of Parker and Trask. One of his cases focuses on a lawsuit against Korinna Industries, a company that just happens to be part of Obadiah Falcone's portfolio of holdings. That's where the problem comes in. Falcone, one of the city's most brutal and successful crime lords, has recently formed an alliance with a denizen



Venturing into Shadows

In a *Shadow Chasers* adventure, the monster is key. That's not to say that you, as the Gamemaster, shouldn't develop a clever plot and cool locations in which to set the action, but the monster (or other opponent) is going to make or break your adventure. Pick a monster from the *Monster Manual*. Any monster. Then think about how such a creature might behave if taken out of its ancient fantasy haunts of D&D and dropped into a contemporary haunt in the modern world. That becomes the first twist in developing a *Shadow Chasers* monster. The second twist comes in when you decide what changes to make to its abilities and attitudes. Finally, in the case of undead monsters, you must decide what its ultimate weakness is. Providing hints throughout the adventure to help lead the heroes to the ultimate solution could make for some exciting scenes along the way.

Low-Level Hook

Let's take a band of medium-sized skeletons, for example. They populate the dungeons and abandoned castles that litter the D&D landscape in every direction. In a *Shadow Chasers* campaign,

our band of skeletons resides in an old warehouse, serving as guardians for the mysterious crates being stored there. In addition to all of the abilities and immunities listed in the *Monster Manual*, these skeletons shatter into scattered bones when their vitality points drop to 0. 1d4 rounds later, however, those bones slide together to reform a revived and fully healthy skeleton. To destroy them completely, the heroes must discover the secret to dealing them deadly damage. It could be anything, but here's a suggestion: these skeletons can only be destroyed by removing the ancient coins that have been hidden within the hollow sockets where their eyes used to be. The heroes must discover that the coins are hidden in these shadow-filled depressions, and then they must remove them during the brief period when the bones are scattered. Once removed, the enchantment dissipates and the bones no longer animate.

What's in the crates? That's up to you. Whatever it is, it probably belongs to the evil wizard who animated the skeleton guards in the first place. Of course, that villain should probably be saved to cause more trouble for the

heroes until they eventually reach a point where they have the skills and power necessary to confront the wizard and deal with his (or her) fiendish plans.

Medium-Level Hook

Another example revolves around gargoyles. A pair (or a wing, if you think your heroes can handle that many) of the flying predators has nested in the spires of an old cathedral in a run-down section of the city. During the day, the creatures perch high above, seeming to be nothing more than stone decorations. At night, however, they swoop down to prey upon anyone unfortunate enough to be walking the streets around the cathedral. The gargoyles work just fine as written in the *Monster Manual*, and since they aren't undead there's no reason for you to develop a special way to kill them. They are tough, however, with damage reduction, multiattack, and a pile of wound points to help them withstand the attacks of even the most persistent group of *Shadow Chasers*.

At night, this neighborhood turns into a war zone. Rival gangs believe that the other is killing its members. The police believe that some kind of serial killer is on the

acter's class bonus to Defense, such as some spells and grapple attacks.

Action Types

The following types of actions define the time frame for how long certain activities take to complete. A round consists of an attack action and a move action, or two move actions, or a full-round action, as described below.

Reactions

Some skill checks are instant. They are reactions to an event, such as making a Ride check to stay on a horse when the horse rears unexpectedly. Some are tests of what a character notices or recognizes, such as a Listen check to notice a vampire sneaking up from behind you. You can make as many of these checks in a round as the situation calls for. In game terms, they take no time and are not considered actions.

Attack Action

An attack action allows you to do something. You can make an attack, use a skill or feat (unless the skill or feat requires a full-round action to perform; see below), or perform other similar actions. During a combat round, you can perform an attack action and move up to your speed. You can move before or after performing an attack action.

Move Action

A move action allows you to move your speed in a round or perform a similar action. You can move your speed, climb, draw a weapon, reload a weapon, pick up an item, make a Drive or Pilot skill check to make a maneuver, or move a heavy object as a move action.

In a combat round, you can perform an attack action and move your speed, or you can move first and then perform an

attack action. You can also perform two move actions in a round instead, using your second move in place of your attack action.

If the action you take during a round results in your moving no actual distance, you can take a 5-foot step.

Full-Round Action

A full-round action consumes all your effort during a round. The only movement you can take when performing a full-round action is a 5-foot step before, during, or after the action. Attacking more than once (if you are permitted to do so) or using a skill or feat that requires a full round to accomplish, such as using Search to examine a 5-foot-by-5-foot area, requires the use of a full-round action.

Free Action

Free actions consume a very small amount of time and effort, and over the span of a round their impact is so minor that they are considered to be free. You can perform one or more free actions while taking another action normally. However, the GM puts reasonable limits on what you can really do for free in the span of 6 seconds.

Longer Than a Round

Some applications of skills take longer than a round to perform. The GM or the skill description set the time frame for some types of actions.

Shadow Checks

Whenever a character comes in direct contact with a denizen of Shadow, the normal human tendency is to attribute the event to something more mundane and to let the memory of the true facts fade. This is a natural defense mechanism for the human mind and it happens automatically unless one of

two conditions exists.

First, a character can attempt to override this natural defense mechanism and try to retain the memory of an encounter with Shadow. This requires a Shadow check. A Shadow check is a Wisdom check made against DC 20. If the check succeeds, the character retains the memory of the event. If the check fails, the memory fades and the character suffers a temporary loss of Wisdom (1 point per hit die of the monster in question, with a minimum of 1 point). Should a character's Wisdom drop to 0, see the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the effects.

Such a character should keep track of every Shadow check that succeeds. When a character makes a number of successful checks (as shown on the checks below), he or she automatically receives the Awareness feat.

Wisdom Score	Number of Successful Shadow Checks Needed
1-5	12
6-7	11
8-9	10
10-11	9
12-13	8
14-15	7
16-17	6
18+	5

Second, a character with the Awareness feat always retains his memory of encounters with Shadow. Such a character also has a chance to notice denizens of Shadow by making a Spot check with a +2 bonus. The more powerful the Shadow creature is, the higher the DC to notice it. However, a character with Awareness automatically sees through the veil of Shadow when a denizen of Shadow attacks him directly.

Take a moment to page through the *Monster Manual*. Everything there exists in our world. And wants you dead.

So, the harpy from the *Monster Manual* has 31 vitality points and 10 wound points.

For undead monsters and other creatures without Constitution scores, all they have is vitality points. When an undead creature runs out of vitality points, it collapses or dissipates or is otherwise incapacitated. It returns to full power after one day passes or some other event (as determined by the GM) occurs. For example, a vampire might only regain 1 vitality point until it feeds. To completely destroy an undead creature, a hero must use a weapon that can truly kill it and score a critical hit. In the example of the vampire, a hero with a wooden stake who scores a critical hit immediately destroys the vampire. In the case of an undead without an obvious weakness, the GM must assign a weapon. The point of an adventure might be for the heroes to discover the weakness before facing the monster for the climax.

Defense

There is no Armor Class in *Shadow Chasers*. Instead, characters have a Defense rating. Defense is determined by adding the following numbers: 10 + class bonus + Dex bonus + size bonus + any miscellaneous bonus. The total, called the character's Defense, represents the number an opponent must achieve when attacking the character.

If a character wears armor, instead of adding to the Defense, the armor provides damage reduction to wound damage.

Converting D&D Monsters

A monster's Defense is the same as its Armor Class. If a monster wears actual armor (not natural armor), such as chainmail, give it a damage reduction equal to half the armor's bonus, rounded down. This DR applies to wound damage only.

Action Points

Action Points represent a character's innate ability to influence the world around her. When a character faces extreme

Pistols (use Pistol Weapon Proficiency)

Type	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range	Mag	Size
LEI Mark 2*	900	3d4	20	6	10	Small
Beretta 92F	650	3d6	20	20	15	Small
Colt Python**	800	3d8	20	20	6	Small
S&W 29**	500	3d8	20	20	6	Small
Colt M1911A1	500	3d8	20	20	8	Small
IMI Desert Eagle	1000	3d10	20	20	10	Small
*Silenced	**Revolver					

Rifles and Shotguns (use Rifle Weapon Proficiency)

Type	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range	Mag	Size
AR70	900	3d6	20	150	30	Medium
M16A2	950	3d8	19-20	150	30	Medium
H&K G3A3	1200	3d8	18-20	200	20	Medium
Mossberg ATP8	500	3d8	20	20	8	Medium
Benelli M1	750	3d8	19-20	20	6	Medium
Beretta M3P	700	3d8	19-20	20	5	Medium

Sub-machineguns (use Sub-machinegun Weapon Proficiency)

Type	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range	Mag	Size
Skorpion	1200	3d4	20	30	20	Small
Beretta 93R	1400	3d6	20	30	20	Small
H&K MP53	3000	3d8	20	30	25	Medium

Heavy Weapons (use Heavy Weapon Proficiency)

Type	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range	Mag	Size
Machinegun	5500	3d10	19-20	100	Belt	Large
Bazooka	4000	3d12	18-20	200	1	Large
LAW	3000	3d10	17-20	200	4	Large

Armor

Type	Cost	DR	Max Dex	Armor Check	Speed	Weight
Flak jacket	500	3	+4	-2	30	20 lbs
Bullet-proof vest	1000	4	+5	-1	30	10 lbs
Body armor	4500	10	+2	-4	20	40 lbs

danger or just has to pull a miracle out of thin air, she spends an Action Point.

Heroes start with 1d4+1 Action Points. Every level, they roll 1d4+1 to replenish their supply.

A character spends an Action Point to influence a task resolution roll (either an attack roll, a skill check, an ability check, or a saving throw). The character can spend the Action Point before or after rolling the d20, but before the GM announces the result of the action.

An Action Point allows the character to add +1d6 to the d20 roll, thus allowing for a greater chance of success. Only one Action Point can be spent on any given action.

Converting D&D Monsters

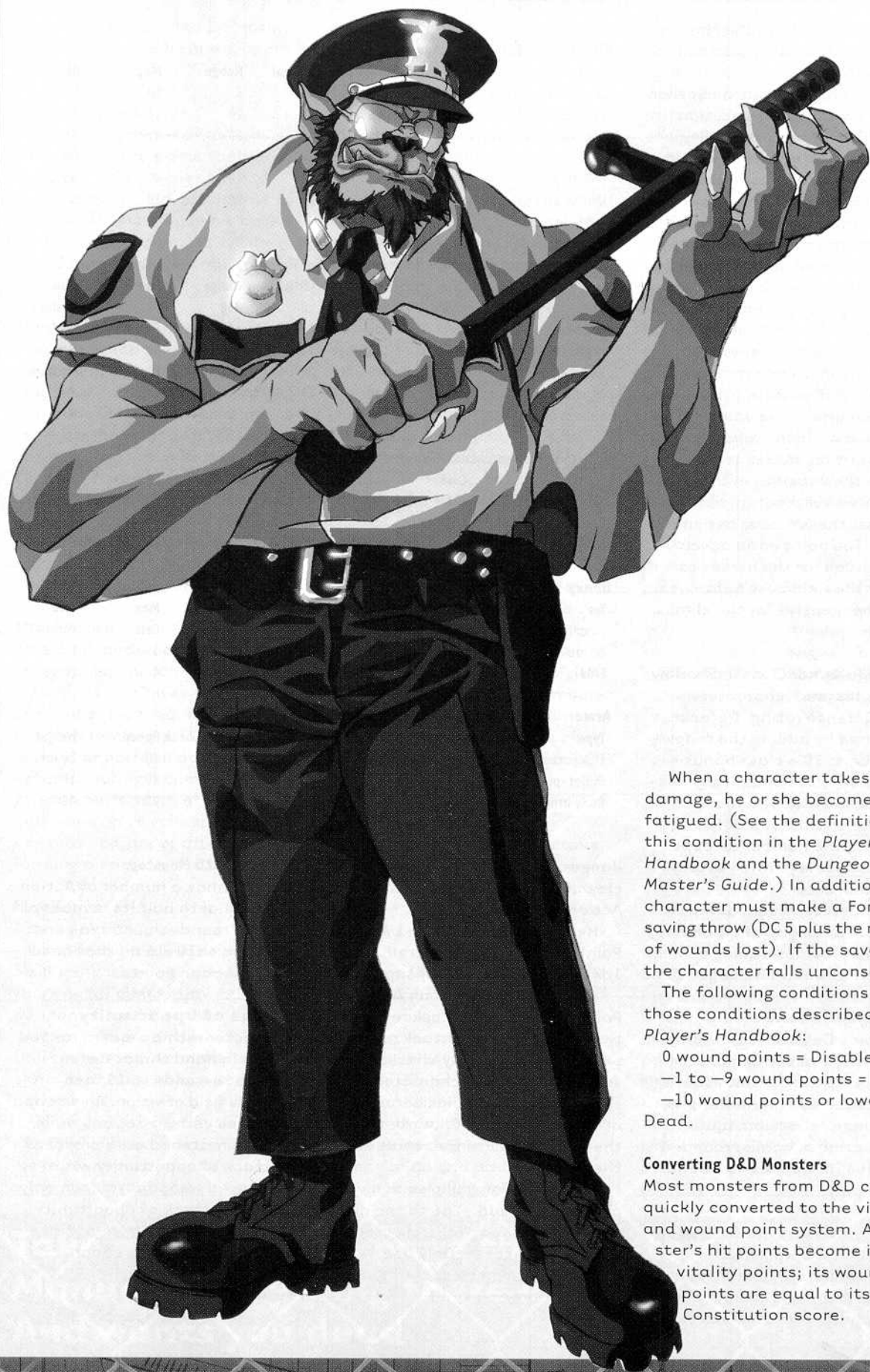
A monster has a number of Action Points equal to half its number of Hit Dice, rounded up. So, a gargoyle with 4d10+16 hit dice has 2 (4÷2=2) Action Points.

Attacks of Opportunity

A character with a modern ranged weapon in hand threatens an area that extends to 10 feet within his field of vision. An enemy that takes certain actions while in your threatened area provokes an attack of opportunity with your ranged weapon. You can only make one attack of opportunity in a round, whether with a melee weapon or a ranged weapon.

Touch Attacks

Some attacks disregard a char-



When a character takes wound damage, he or she becomes fatigued. (See the definition of this condition in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.) In addition, the character must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 5 plus the number of wounds lost). If the save fails, the character falls unconscious.

The following conditions match those conditions described in the *Player's Handbook*:

- 0 wound points = Disabled
- 1 to -9 wound points = Dying
- 10 wound points or lower = Dead.

Converting D&D Monsters

Most monsters from D&D can be quickly converted to the vitality and wound point system. A monster's hit points become its vitality points; its wound points are equal to its Constitution score.

Weapons and Combat

In addition to the archaic and simple weapons listed in the *Player's Handbook* (note that weapons classified as martial become archaic in *Shadow Chasers*), the modern-day weapons on Chart 5-1 are available in the campaign. Note that while automatic weapons don't provide a character with additional attacks in a round, an automatic weapon generally has a capability to deal greater damage than an equivalent single-shot or semi-automatic weapon, and a greater critical threat range.

Combat and Game Play

If you know how to play D&D, you know how to play *Shadow Chasers*. Skill and combat resolution works just like it does in D&D. There are a few differences to account for the contemporary setting. These are detailed below.

Vitality and Wound Points

Instead of hit points, characters and monsters have vitality and wound points. For humans, only heroic characters have vitality points. Commoners only have wound points. Most monsters have both vitality and wound points, though the GM can decide that commoner monsters exist, especially among the creatures that have some semblance of a society, such as orcs and bugbears.

Vitality points represent a character's ability to turn a direct hit into a glancing blow or a near miss. A loss of vitality represents a loss of energy, *per se*, but not actual, physical damage.

Most damage reduces vitality points. When a character's vitality points are depleted, damage is applied to wounds.

Wound points represent how much physical damage a character can take before dying. Wound points are reduced only after a character has exhausted his or her vitality points, or when the character is struck by a critical hit.

Vitality points are based on a character's level and class. Vitality points increase with each level gained. Wound points are equal to a character's Constitution score. They do not increase with level advancement unless specified by a class ability or a feat.

Damage Effects

When a character is reduced to 0 vitality points, he or she can no longer avoid real damage. Any additional damage dealt to the character is deducted from the character's wound points.

rogue class, for definitions of these special abilities.)

Shadow Blood Templates

While all characters are human, the Gamemaster can allow some characters to have the blood of Shadow in their veins. This means that if you shake that character's family tree, a vampire or demon or other creature of Shadow will fall out of it from somewhere in the distant past. The more Shadow blood that runs through a character's veins, the less human that character is. There are both benefits and drawbacks to possessing Shadow blood. The GM should consider carefully before allowing too many members of the party to create characters with blood ties to Shadow.

The Blood of Shadow

A human with the blood of Shadow running through his veins receives both the blessing and the taint of Shadow. Such a character might look human, but the character's ties to Shadow hint at subtle differences that make others feel the character is spooky. Others feel uneasy in their presence, even if they can't quite put their fingers on the source of their discomfort.

There are three Shadow Blood templates available for characters in *Shadow Chasers*: Fiendish Blood, Lycanthropic Blood, and Vampiric Blood. A character selects one of these templates during character creation, with the GM's permission. The templates are presented below.

Fiendish Blood

This character has ties to the fiendish creatures of the infernal planes, the realms of evil from which the most terrible denizens of Shadow emerge. This fiendish blood gives a character an aura of otherworldly wrongness that most humans find disturbing. The character with fiendish blood has a tell-tale trace of this infernal nature—either small, barely visible horns, or eyes with a reptilian look, or an infernal birthmark, or some other fiendish reminder of the

blood running through the character's veins.

Special Qualities: A character with fiendish blood gains the following special qualities, in addition to any others provided by race and class:

- Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.
- Cold and fire resistance 5.
- Damage reduction 5 (wound damage only).

Special Penalties: A character with fiendish blood suffers the following penalties:

- Fiendish aura, provides a —6 profane penalty to all Charisma-based skills due to the disturbing nature that others sense in the character.
- No bonus human skill points.
- No bonus human feat at 1st level.

Lycanthropic Blood

One of this character's ancestors was infected with the transforming curse of lycanthropy. While not affected by the full curse, the blooded character has traits associated with her feral nature. This means that the character doesn't shapeshift into an animal when the full moon rises. It does mean that the character has a variety of abilities associated with the ancient curse that howls in her blood.

Special Qualities: A character with lycanthropic blood gains the following special qualities, in addition to any others provided by race and class:

- Control shape. The character can transform her hands into claws, though this is physically exhausting to maintain (costs 2 vitality points per round). The claws deal 1d8 points of damage, plus the character's Strength bonus. The claws have a threat range of 20. Extending or retracting the claws is a move action.
- Supernatural senses, +2 bonus to Listen and Spot checks.
- Low-light vision with a range of 60 feet.

Special Penalties: A character with lycanthropic blood suffers the following penalties:

• Weakness to silver weapons. A character with lycanthropic blood suffers double damage when struck by a silver weapon.

• Feral rage. Whenever the character suffers damage or otherwise gets extremely angry, make a Will save. The DC is 10, though the GM can modify this based on the situation and circumstances to as low as 5 and as high as 20. In a feral rage, the character attacks the closest target, friend or foe. She uses her claws, no matter what other weapon she may possess or have access to. The rage lasts for 1d4 rounds plus the character's Constitution modifier, or until no visible targets remain within 30 feet of the character. While gripped by the feral rage, the character temporarily gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Strength and a +4 circumstance bonus to Constitution, and suffers a —4 circumstance penalty to Defense.

- No bonus human skill points.

Vampiric Blood

Somehow, one of the character's ancestors survived an encounter with a vampire. The taint of the vampire was passed on through the ancestor's blood, however, giving the character qualities associated with unholy undead creatures of Shadow.

Special Qualities: A character with vampiric blood gains the following special qualities, in addition to any others provided by race and class.

- +2 Strength.
- Fast Healing 3 (vitality points) per round (see the *Monster Manual* introduction for more details on this special quality).

- Damage reduction 2/— (wound damage only).

Special Penalties: A character with vampiric blood suffers the following penalties:

- —2 Constitution.
- Light Sensitivity. The character suffers a —1 circumstance penalty to attack and skill rolls made in sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.
- No bonus human skill points.



Table 4-5: The Thief

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense
1	1	0	2	0	Bonus Feat	1
2	2	0	3	0	Evasion	1
3	3	1	3	1	Bonus Feat	2
4	3	1	4	1	Uncanny Dodge	2
5	4	1	4	1	Special Ability	3
6	5	2	5	2	Uncanny Dodge	3
7	6/1	2	5	2	Bonus Feat	4
8	6/1	2	6	2	Uncanny Dodge	4
9	7/2	3	6	3	Bonus Feat	5
10	8/3	3	7	3	Special Ability	5

Hide: The character must at least 4 ranks in the Hide skill.

Move Silently: The character must have at least 4 ranks in the Move Silently skill.

Class Skills

Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Vitality

1d6 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Bonus Feats

The Thief gains bonus feats at 1st, 3rd, 7th, and 9th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Acrobatics, Alertness, Cautious, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Expertise (Improved Disarm, Improved Trip), Martial Arts (Defensive), Mimic, Nimble, Pistol Weapon Proficiency, Quickness, Run, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

Evasion

See the definition for this special ability in the *Player's Handbook*.

Uncanny Dodge

At 4th level, the Thief can no longer be flanked. At 6th level, the Thief gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +1 bonus to Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to Defense against attacks by traps. At 8th level, these bonuses increase to +2.

Special Ability

At 5th and 10th level, the Thief selects a special ability from the following list: *Defensive Roll*, *Improved Evasion*, *Opportunist*, or the Thief may gain a feat in place of a special ability. (See the *Player's Handbook*, under the



Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Vitality

1d10 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Bonus Feats

The Soldier gains bonus feats at 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list:

Ambidexterity, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Athletic, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Endurance, Expertise (Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Whirlwind Attack), Heavy Weapon Proficiency, Heroic Surge, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Martial Arts (Defensive, Improved, Advanced), Pistol Weapon Proficiency, Point Blank Shot (Far Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run), Power Attack (Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Sunder, Great Cleave), Quick Draw, Quickness, Rifle

Table 4-4: The Soldier

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Defense
1	4	4	1	1	Bonus Feat	1
2	5	4	1	1	+1 Wound	2
3	6/1	5	2	2	Bonus Feat	3
4	7/2	5	2	2	Weapon Special.	3
5	8/3	6	2	2	Bonus Feat	4
6	9/4	6	3	3	+1 Wound	5
7	10/5	7	3	3	Bonus Feat	5
8	11/6/1	7	3	3	Weapon Special.	6
9	12/7/2	8	4	4	Bonus Feat	7
10	13/8/3	8	4	4	+1 Wound	7

Weapon Proficiency, Sub-machinegun Weapon Proficiency, Toughness, Two Weapon Fighting (Improved Two-Weapon Fighting), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

+1 Wound

At 2nd, 6th, and 10th level, the Soldier gains an additional wound point.

Weapon Specialization

At 4th and 8th level, the Soldier gains Weapon Specialization, adding a +2 damage bonus with a chosen weapon. The Soldier must have Weapon Focus with that weapon. If the weapon is a ranged weapon, the damage

bonus only applies if the target is within 30 feet.

The Thief

The Thief might be a stealthy rogue or a silver-tongued trickster. He might be a scout, an infiltrator, a spy, or a diplomat. Whatever role the Thief decides to fill, he is versatile, adaptable, and resourceful.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Thief, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Fast Levels: The character must have at least 3 levels of Fast hero.

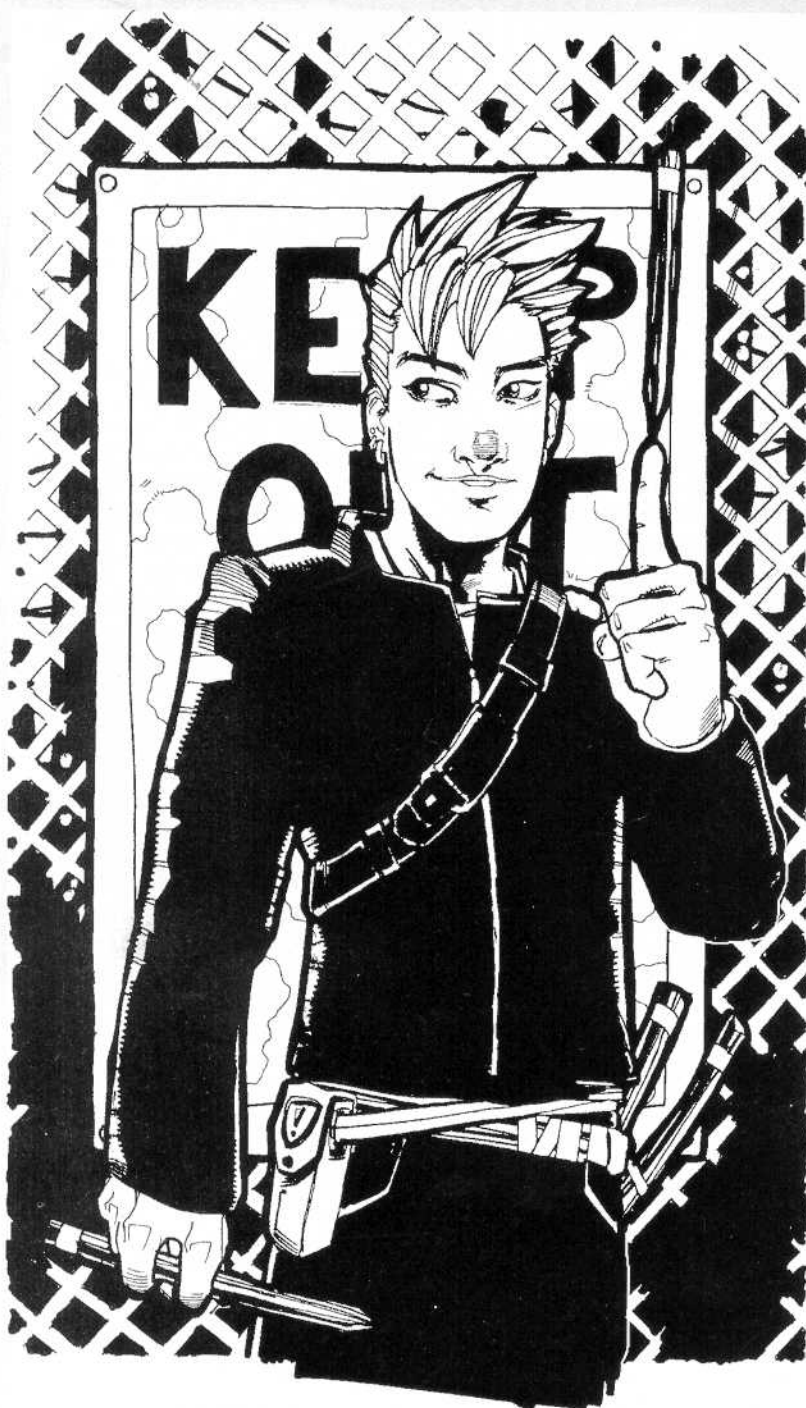


Table 4-4: The Shadow Slayer

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Defense
1	1	2	0	0	Detect Shadow	1
2	2	3	0	0	Bonus Feat	2
3	3	3	1	1	Favored Enemy	2
4	4	4	1	1	Bonus Feat	3
5	5	4	1	1	Special Ability	3
6	6/1	5	2	2	Bonus Feat	4
7	7/2	5	2	2	Favored Enemy	4
8	8/3	6	2	2	Bonus Feat	5
9	9/4	6	3	3	Favored Enemy	5
10	10/5	7	3	3	Special Ability	6

Regeneration allows the Shadow Slayer to regain a number of wound points equal to his Slayer level every day.

Damage Reduction reduces the amount of wound damage the Shadow Slayer suffers when fighting against the natural weapons of the denizens of Shadow. It does not reduce damage dealt by pistols, rifles, or non-Shadow weapons. The DR equals one-half the character's Slayer level, rounded up.

+2 Wounds indicates that the Shadow Slayer is tougher than normal. Increase his wound point total by 2.

The Soldier

The Soldier combines discipline with martial skills to become a trained warrior. A Soldier might be a trained military professional, a private guard, a law enforcer, or other specific warrior with some amount of training and experience. Some Soldiers are masters of weapons, others of martial arts. Some concentrate on tactics and strategy, others on defense instead of offense. Either way, you want the Soldier around when a fight breaks out. A Soldier might be attached to a special unit, a police force, a private security firm, or might be in business for himself as a mercenary or bounty hunter. Taking a level in Soldier indicates a concentration on combat training above and beyond what most people experience in day-to-day life.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Soldier, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Strong Levels: The character must have at least 3 levels of Strong hero.

Feat: The character must have the Point Blank Shot feat.

Class Skills

Climb (Str), Demolitions (Int), Drive (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Speak Language,

Table 4-3: Mentor Secrets

Level		
+ Int Mod	Secret	Effect
1	Secret of speed	+3 vitality
2	Secret of inner strength	+1 Will save
3	Secret of true stamina	+1 Fort save
4	Secret of avoidance	+1 Reflex save
5	Secret of combat	+1 to attacks with a specific weapon
6	Secret of melee defense against melee attacks	+1 dodge bonus to Defense
7	Secret of ranged defense against ranged attacks	+1 dodge bonus to Defense
8	Secret knowledge	Any one feat
9	Secret of life	+1 wound
10	Secret of damage	+1 damage with a specific weapon

Class Skills

Appraise (Int), Computer Use (Int), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis), Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Vitality

1d6 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Secret/Train

The Mentor stumbles upon applicable knowledge during her studies. Choose a secret at 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th level and use it yourself. At 2nd, 5th, and 8th level select a secret and pass it on to your student as part of his training. No secret can be selected twice for the same character, though the Mentor can give the same secret to both herself and her student. The Mentor can select a secret that is equal to or less than her level plus her Intelligence modifier on Table 4-3. For example, a character with 2 levels of Mentor and an Intelligence modifier of +3 can choose a secret from 1 to 5.

Bonus Feats

The Mentor gains bonus feats at 3rd, 6th, and 9th level. This feat must be a selected from the following list: Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Awareness, Expertise, Heroic Surge, Improved

Critical, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Martial Arts (Defensive, Improved), Persuasive, Pistol Weapon Proficiency, Skill Emphasis, Trustworthy, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

The Shadow Slayer

Every generation, a champion arises to combat the forces of darkness and defeat the denizens of Shadow. The Shadow Slayer has a destiny he cannot deny, an ability and knack that lead him deeper into the lair of the Shadows while also attracting the attention of evil creatures everywhere. The Shadow Slayer doesn't immediately recognize his destiny. It comes upon him after a few encounters with the denizens of Shadow. There should not be more than one Shadow Slayer in a group of Shadow Chasers, and perhaps not more than one in any region of the country.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Shadow Slayer, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Strong Levels: The character must have at least 1 level of Strong hero.

Fast Levels: The character must have at least 1 level of Fast hero.

Awareness: The character must have the Awareness feat.

Base Attack Bonus: The character must have a base attack bonus of +2 or better.

Class Skills

Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Drive (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Listen

(Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Vitality

1d8 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Detect Shadow

At 1st level, the Shadow Slayer can sense the presence of the denizens of Shadow. This works like the *detect evil* spell, except that it is a natural ability of the Shadow Slayer, it can only be used a number of times per day equal to the character's Slayer level, and instead of evil it detects a relationship to Shadow. In this case, any creature described in the *Monster Manual* is considered to be a denizen of Shadow.

Bonus Feats

The Shadow Slayer gains bonus feats at 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Acrobatics, Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Athletic, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Endurance, Extra Action Points, Heroic Surge, Improved Critical, Power Attack (Cleave, Great Cleave), Weapon Focus.

Favored Enemy

At 3rd, 7th, and 9th level, the Shadow Slayer selects a type of Shadow creature as a favored enemy. Types include aberrations, beasts, constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, giants, magical beasts, shapechangers, undead, and vermin. The benefits are described under the ranger class in the *Player's Handbook*.

Special Ability

At 5th and 10th level, the Shadow Slayer selects a special ability from the following list: *Fast Healing*, *Regeneration*, *Damage Reduction*, or *+2 Wound Points*.

Fast Healing allows the Shadow Slayer to regain a number of vitality points equal to his Slayer level every round.



Table 4-2: The Mentor

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense
1	1	2	0	2	Secret	2
2	2	3	0	3	Train	2
3	3	3	1	3	Bonus Feat	2
4	3	4	1	4	Secret	3
5	4	4	1	4	Train	3
6	5	5	2	5	Bonus Feat	3
7	6/1	5	2	5	Secret	4
8	7/2	6	2	6	Train	4
9	8/3	6	3	6	Bonus Feat	4
10	9/4	7	3	7	Secret	5

Bonus Feats

The Mage gains bonus feats at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level. This feat must be a metamagic feat, an item creation feat, or Spell Mastery, as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Summon Familiar

At 5th level, a Mage can obtain a familiar. See the *Player's Handbook* for details.

Mage Spells Per Day

Level	0	1	2	3	4	5
1	3	1	—	—	—	—
2	4	2	—	—	—	—
3	4	2	1	—	—	—
4	4	3	2	—	—	—
5	4	3	2	1	—	—
6	4	3	3	2	—	—
7	4	4	3	2	1	—
8	4	4	3	3	2	—
9	4	4	4	3	2	1
10	4	4	4	3	3	2

Spells

A Mage cast arcane spells. See the rules for wizards in the *Player's Handbook* for details on preparing spells and using spellbooks.

The Mentor

The Mentor uses her knowledge to watch over and train another character (often the Shadow Slayer, but any character will do). It is the Mentor's destiny to discover the Champion who will battle against the creatures of Shadow and guide him in his efforts. This student, once selected, remains connected to the Mentor until either the Mentor or the student dies.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Mentor, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Smart Levels: The character must have at least 1 level of Smart hero.

Dedicated Levels: The character must have at least 2 levels of Dedicated hero.

Knowledge (arcana): The character must have at least 4 ranks in the Knowledge (arcana) skill.

Knowledge (Shadow lore): The character must have at least 4 ranks in the Knowledge (Shadow lore) skill.



Advanced Characters

Characters who qualify can choose a prestige class as a multiclass as they advance in level. These prestige classes allow characters to develop and give them access to new abilities. The prestige classes available in *Shadow Chasers* include the Mage, the Mentor, the Shadow Slayer, the Soldier, and the Thief.

The Mage

The Mage uncovers the secrets of the arcane arts and learns how to cast spells. A Mage might call herself a witch or a wizard. With a few unintelligible words and a fleeting gesture, the Mage discharges arcane energy to specific effect. The Mage spends a lot of time conducting research, studying ancient tomes, and practicing the fine points of the arcane arts.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Mage, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Table 4-1: The Mage

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense
1	1	0	0	2	Mage Skill	1
2	2	0	0	3	Bonus Feat	1
3	2	1	1	3	Mage Skill	2
4	3	1	1	4	Bonus Feat	2
5	3	1	1	4	Summon Familiar	2
6	4	2	2	5	Bonus Feat	3
7	4	2	2	5	Mage Skill	3
8	5	2	2	6	Bonus Feat	3
9	5	3	3	6	Mage Skill	4
10	6/1	3	3	7	Bonus Feat	4

Smart Levels: The character must have at least 3 levels of Smart hero.

Knowledge (arcana): The character must have at least 4 ranks in the Knowledge (arcana) skill.

Class Skills

Appraise (Int), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Knowledge (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Vitality

1d6 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Mage Skills

At 1st, 3rd, 7th, and 9th level, the Mage selects a skill from the following list. Once selected, the skill becomes a class skill. Descriptions of these skills can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Concentration (Con), Scry (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Use Magic Device (Cha).

Martial Arts, Defensive

You are more skilled at avoiding harm due to your martial arts training.

Prerequisite: Martial Arts.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus to Defense.

Martial Arts, Improved

You are more skilled at unarmed attacks due to your improved training.

Prerequisites: Martial Arts, base attack +4 or higher.

Benefit: You deal 2d4 damage with an unarmed attack. Also, you threaten on a natural 19 or 20 when making an unarmed attack.

Martial Arts, Advanced

You are a master at unarmed attacks due to your improved training.

Prerequisites: Martial Arts, Improved Martial Arts, base attack +6 or higher.

Benefit: You deal 3d4 damage with an unarmed attack. Also, you threaten on a natural 18, 19, or 20 when making an unarmed attack.

Mimic

You have a gift for impersonation.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Disguise checks and Perform (acting) checks.

Nimble

You have exceptional flexibility and manual dexterity.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Escape Artist checks and Pick Pocket checks.

Persuasive

You have a way with words and body language.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Bluff checks and Intimidate checks.

Pistol Weapon Proficiency

Choose a type of pistol, either a revolver or an automatic, such as a 9mm. You understand how to use that type of weapon in combat.

Use this feat to expand the list of weapons you are proficient with beyond the basic lists included with your class description.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character that uses a weapon without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

Quickness

You are good at turning attacks that might deal damage into near misses and glancing blows.

Benefit: You get +3 vitality points.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times.

Rifle Weapon Proficiency

Choose a type of rifle, either a bolt action, semi-automatic, or an automatic, such as a 7.62 assault rifle. You understand how to use that type of weapon in combat.

Use this feat to expand the list of weapons you are proficient with beyond the basic lists included with your class description.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character that uses a weapon without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

Sharp-Eyed

You have an eye for details.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Search checks and Sense Motive checks.

Skill Emphasis

Choose a skill. You have a special knack with that skill.

Benefit: You get a +3 bonus on all skill checks with that skill.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat it applies to a different skill.

Stealthy

You are particularly good at avoiding notice.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Hide checks and Move Silently checks.

Sub-machinegun Weapon Proficiency

Choose a type of sub-machinegun, such as an Uzi. You understand how to use that type of weapon in combat.

Use this feat to expand the list of weapons you are proficient with beyond the basic lists included with your class description.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character that uses a weapon without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

Surgery

You can perform surgical procedures to heal a wounded character.

Prerequisite: 4+ ranks in Treat Injury.

Benefit: When you make a Treat Injury check to heal a wounded character, the result allows you to restore wound points. You can't take 20. You can't perform surgery during a combat situation. You can't restore more wounds than the character's total.

Result	Wounds Restored
5-9	2
10-14	4
15-20	6
20-24	8
25+	10

A character healed by surgery is fatigued for a number of hours equal to the number of wounds restored.

Toughness

You are tougher than normal.

Benefit: You gain +3 wound points.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times.

Trustworthy

You have a friendly demeanor.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Diplomacy checks and Gather Information checks.

Table 3-1: Feats

Feat	Prerequisite		
Acrobatic	—	Mimic	—
Alertness	—	Nimble	—
Ambidexterity	Dex 15+	Persuasive	—
Archaic Weapon Proficiency*	—	Pistol Weapon Proficiency*	—
Armor Proficiency (light)	—	Point Blank Shot	—
Armor (medium)	Armor (light)	Far Shot	Point Blank Shot
Armor (heavy)	Armor (light, medium)	Precise Shot	Point Blank Shot
Athletic	—	Rapid Shot	Point Blank Shot, Dex 13+
Awareness	Wis 13+ or special	Shot on the Run	Point Blank Shot, Dex 13+ Dodge, Mobility
Blind-Fight	—	Power Attack	Str 13+
Combat Casting	—	Cleave	Str 13+, Power Attack
Combat Reflexes	—	Improved Bull Rush	Str 13+, Power Attack
Cautious	—	Sunder	Str 13+, Power Attack
Dodge	Dex 13+	Great Cleave	Str 13+, Power Attack, Cleave, Base attack bonus +4 or higher
Mobility	Dex 13+, Dodge	Quick Draw	Base attack bonus +1 or higher
Spring Attack	Dex 13+, Dodge, Mobility, +4 base attack	Quickness**	—
Endurance	—	Rifle Weapon Proficiency*	—
Expertise	Int 13+	Run	—
Improved Disarm	Int 13+, Expertise	Simple Weapon Proficiency	—
Improved Trip	Int 13+, Expertise	Skill Emphasis*	—
Whirlwind Attack	Int 13+, Expertise, Dex 13+, Dodge, Mobility, Base attack +4 or higher, Spring Attack	Sharp-Eyed	—
Extra Action Points**	Cha 13+	Spell Focus*	—
Fame	—	Spell Penetration	—
Frightful Presence	Cha 15+, Intimidate 9+ ranks	Stealthy	—
Gearhead	—	Sub-machinegun Weapon Proficiency*	—
Great Fortitude	—	Surgery	4+ ranks in Treat Injury
Heavy Weapon Proficiency*	—	Toughness**	—
Heroic Surge	—	Track	—
Improved Critical*	Proficient with weapon, Base attack bonus +4 or higher	Trustworthy	—
Improved Initiative	—	Two-Weapon Fighting	—
Infamy	—	Improved Two-Weapon	Two-Weapon Fighting, Ambidexterity, Base attack bonus +9 or higher
Iron Will	—	Weapon Finesse*	Proficient with weapon, Base attack bonus +1 or higher
Lightning Reflexes	—	Weapon Focus*	Proficient with weapon, Base attack bonus +1 or Higher
Martial Arts	—		
Defensive	Martial Arts		
Improved Martial Arts	Martial Arts		
Advanced Martial Arts	Martial Arts, Improved Martial Arts		

* You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon, skill, school of magic, or selection of spells.

** You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.



Normal: A character that uses a weapon without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

Heroic Surge

You can perform additional actions in a round.

Benefit: You may take an extra move or attack action in a round, either before or after your regular actions. You can use Heroic Surge a number of times per day, depending on your level, but never more than once per

round. 1st-4th level: 1/day; 5th-8th level: 2/day; 9th-12th level: 3/day; 13th-16th level: 4/day; 17th-20th level: 5/day.

Infamy

You are well known for crimes or evil deeds (regardless of whether you actually committed these crimes or evil deeds).

Benefit: You get a +3 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate whenever the GM determines that your notoriety would be a benefit. However, in other circumstances your infamy gives such checks a

-3 penalty.

Special: You can't select both Fame and Infamy.

Martial Arts

You are skilled at unarmed combat, dealing more damage and capable of inflicting critical hits with unarmed attacks.

Benefit: You deal 1d6 damage with an unarmed attack. Also, you threaten on a natural 20 when making an unarmed attack.

Normal: Without this feat, a character deals 1d3 damage and can't inflict a critical hit with an unarmed attack.

Feats

Shadow Chasers uses a mix of new feats as well as feats familiar to D&D players. Unless noted and described below, you can find descriptions of these feats in the *Player's Handbook*. If a feat from the *Player's Handbook* doesn't appear on the list below, it is not recommended for use with *Shadow Chasers*.

Acrobatic

You are agile.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Jump checks and Tumble checks.

Archaic Weapon Proficiency

Choose a type of archaic weapon, such as a longsword. You understand how to use that type of weapon in combat.

Use this feat to expand the list of weapons you are proficient with beyond the basic lists included with your class description.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Normal: A character who uses a weapon without being proficient with it suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

Awareness

You have an innate understanding of the true nature of the world.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Spot checks when trying to notice denizens of Shadow. Also, your memory of Shadow-related events doesn't fade.

Normal: Without this feat,

characters have a difficult time seeing the denizens of Shadow for what they really are, and their memory of Shadow-related events doesn't stick. ("That wasn't a werewolf, it was just an unusually large dog.")

Special: You also can gain this feat by succeeding at a number of Shadow checks. See Chapter 5: Weapons and Combat for more details on Shadow Checks.

Cautious

You are especially careful with tasks that may yield catastrophic results.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Demolitions checks and Disable Device checks.

Extra Action Points

You have a knack for getting out of difficult situations.

Benefit: You get 1d4+1 action points.

Fame

You are particularly well known.

Benefit: You get a +3 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skills whenever the GM determines that your celebrity status would be a benefit.

Special: You can't select both Fame and Infamy.

Frightful Presence

Your mere presence can terrify those around you.

Benefit: Once per round you can, as a free action, use your Frightful Presence. All opponents within 30 feet who have fewer levels than you must make a Will saving throw (DC 10 plus your level and Charisma modifier). An opponent who fails the save is shaken, suffering a -2 penalty to attack rolls, saves, and skill checks for a number of rounds equal to 1d6 plus your Charisma modifier rounds.

Gearhead

You have a way with machines.

Benefit: You get a +2 synergy bonus on all Repair checks and Computer Use checks.

Heavy Weapon Proficiency

Choose a type of heavy weapon, such as a bazooka. You understand how to use that type of weapon in combat.

Use this feat to expand the list of weapons you are proficient with beyond the basic lists included with your class description.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the weapon normally.

Table 2-3: Repair

Task	DC	Cost
Simple (tools, simple weapon)	10	1/5th price
Moderate (high-tech weapon, mechanical or electronic component)	15	1/5th price
Complex (vehicle component, computer)	20	1/5th price
Very complex (airplane component)	25	1/10th price

represents a study of a body of academic or scientific discipline.

- Arcana (ancient mysteries, magic traditions, arcane symbols)

- Archeology
- Architecture
- Astrology
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Bureaucracy
- Business
- Chemistry
- Engineering
- Forensics
- Genetics
- Geography
- History
- Medicine
- Physics
- Politics
- Religion
- Shadow lore
- Streetwise
- Tactics
- Wilderness lore

Pilot (Dex, Trained Only)

Use this skill to operate an airplane.

Check: Typical piloting tasks don't require checks. Checks are required during combat, to perform unusual maneuvers, or in extreme circumstances.

Repair (Int, Trained Only)

You can fix damaged machinery and electronic devices.

Check: Most Repair checks are made to fix complex mechanical, electronic, or computerized devices, such as vehicles, computers, or weapons. The GM sets the DC, using the guidelines suggested below. There is also a monetary cost to making repairs, also shown on the Table 2-3.

Simple repairs require no more than a few minutes. Complex repairs can take multiple hours or more to complete.

Working without the proper tools gives you a -5 penalty to the check.

You can make temporary (jury-rigged) repairs. This reduces the DC by 5 and allows you to make the check as a full-round action. However, a jury-rigged repair can only fix a single problem with a check, and the temporary repair only lasts until the end of the current encounter and then the item needs to be completely repaired. The jury-rig function of this skill can be used untrained.

Retry: You can try again, but only if you are aware that the repairs didn't work. The GM may decide that a failed Repair check has negative ramifications that prevent repeated checks.

Treat Injury (Wis, Trained Only)

Use this skill to help characters that have been hurt by damage, poison, or disease.

Check: The DC and effect depend on the task you attempt:

Task	DC
Long-term care	15
Treat disease	See below
Treat poison	See below
Use first aid kit	15

Long-term Care: Some injuries require treatment that stretches over a number of days. The successful application of this skill allows a patient to recover wound points and ability points lost to temporary damage at twice the normal rate (2 wound points or 2 ability points restored per day, instead of the normal 1 per day). A new check is made each day; on a failed check, the recovery rate occurs at the normal rate for that day of rest and care.

You can tend up to as many patients as you have ranks in the

skill. You need medical supplies and the patients need to spend all of their time resting. You need to devote at least an hour of the day to each patient you are caring for.

You can't provide long-term care to yourself.

Treat Disease: You can tend to a diseased character. Every time the diseased character makes a saving throw against disease effects (after the initial contamination), you make a Treat Injury check to help the character fend off secondary damage. The diseased character uses your result instead of his own saving throw if your result is higher.

Treat Poison: You can tend to a poisoned character. Every time the poisoned character makes a saving throw against poison effects (after the initial introduction of the poison to his or her system), you make a Treat Injury check to help the character avoid secondary damage. The poisoned character uses your result instead of his own saving throw if your result is higher.

Use First Aid Kit: With a first aid kit and a little skill you can keep a badly wounded character from dying or restore vitality points. This check is an attack action.

If a character has negative wound points and is losing wound points (at 1 per round, 1 per hour, or 1 per day), you can stabilize the character. The character regains no wound points but he or she does stop losing them. A character can be stabilized as often as necessary.

If a character has lost vitality points, you can restore some of them by giving the character's system a boost. A successful check restores a number of vitality points equal to the number of ranks you possess in the skill, plus 1d4. The number restored can never exceed the character's total vitality points. This application can only be used successfully on a character once in a 24-hour period.

"Chasers with mad skills get mad kills."

— Shadow Chaser proverb

Table 2-2: Skills

Shadow Chasers uses a mix of new skills as well as skills familiar to D&D players. Unless noted and described below, you can find descriptions of these skills in the *Player's Handbook*.

Skill	Ability	Untrnd?	Cha	Ded	Fast	Smart	Strong
Animal Empathy	Cha	No	•	X	X	X	X
Appraise	Int	Yes	X	X	X	•	X
Balance	Dex	Yes	X	X	•	X	X
Bluff	Cha	Yes	•	X	X	X	X
Climb	Str	Yes	X	X	X	X	•
Computer Use	Int	Yes	X	•	X	•	X
Craft	Int	Yes	•	•	•	•	•
Decipher Script	Int	No	X	•	X	•	X
Demolitions	Int	No	X	X	X	•	X
Diplomacy	Cha	Yes	•	X	X	X	X
Disable Device	Int	No	X	X	X	•	X
Disguise	Cha	Yes	•	X	X	X	X
Drive	Dex	Yes	•	•	•	•	•
Escape Artist	Dex	Yes	X	X	•	X	X
Forgery	Int	Yes	X	X	X	•	X
Gather Information	Cha	Yes	•	X	X	X	X
Handle Animal	Cha	No	•	X	X	X	X
Hide	Dex	Yes	X	X	•	X	X
Intimidate	Cha	Yes	•	X	X	X	X
Jump	Str	Yes	X	X	•	X	•
Knowledge	Int	No	•	•	•	•	•
Listen	Wis	Yes	X	•	X	X	X
Move Silently	Dex	Yes	X	X	•	X	X
Open Lock	Dex	No	X	X	•	X	X
Perform	Cha	Yes	•	•	•	•	•
Pick Pocket	Dex	No	X	X	•	X	X
Pilot	Dex	No	X	X	•	X	X
Profession	Wis	No	•	•	•	•	•
Read/Write Language	None	No	•	•	•	•	•
Repair	Int	No	X	X	X	•	X
Ride	Dex	Yes	X	X	•	X	X
Search	Int	Yes	X	X	X	•	X
Sense Motive	Wis	Yes	X	•	X	X	X
Speak Language	None	No	•	•	•	•	•
Spot	Wis	Yes	•	•	•	•	•
Survival	Wis	Yes	X	•	X	X	•
Swim	Str	Yes	X	X	X	X	•
Treat Injury	Wis	No	X	•	X	•	X
Tumble	Dex	No	X	X	•	X	X
Use Magic Device	Cha	No	X	X	X	X	X

• Class Skill X Cross-Class Skill

When building explosive devices, the character decides what kind of result he or she is after and tries to achieve the required DC. Adding a trap increases the complexity but doesn't affect the cost.

If the check fails, the device is ruined and the materials are wasted. There is a 25% chance that the explosive detonates during construction, dealing one-half of its intended damage.

A character uses the Disable Device skill to attempt to disarm a set explosive. The DC is 10 for a simple explosive device, 15 for a

moderate explosive device, 20 for a complex explosive device, and so on. If the builder was successful in adding a trap, increase the DC by +10, +15, or +20.

Special: You can take 10 when using the Demolitions skill, but you can't take 20.

Setting an explosive device for maximum blast efficiency takes one minute or more, depending on the scope of the job. You can set a simple explosive device as a full-round action.

Building an explosive from scratch, which includes fash-

ioning the raw materials and combining chemicals and combustibles inside a housing of some kind, requires a check that takes the following amount of time: improvised, full-round action; simple, one hour; moderate, 12 hours; complex, one day; powerful, three days; devastating, one week.

Knowledge (Int, Trained Only)

This skill encompasses a number of unrelated skills. Knowledge



Demolitions (Int; Trained Only)

Use this skill to create and set explosive devices for maximum impact.

Check: Setting a simple explosive to blow up at a certain spot doesn't require a check, but any attempt to build an explosive device or set an explosive to cause a specific damage effect does.

Set Explosive Device: Placing an explosive in the optimum location for maximum blast efficiency takes skill and patience. The GM makes the check and compares it to the DC below. (The GM makes the check so that you don't know exactly how well you've done.) The DC indicates changes in base damage, as well as sets penalties to those caught in the blast radius. A failed check reduces the explosive power by half, provides a +4 circumstance bonus to

Reflex saves to avoid damage, and has a chance of causing the device to explode prematurely (15%). This skill is used to set an explosive device that includes a timer or detonator.

DC	Damage Increase	Penalty to Save
10	None	0
15	x2	-2
20	x3	-4
30	x4	-6

Build Explosive Device from

Scratch: Creating a scratch-built explosive device requires the appropriate materials and time. In combat, the best that could be accomplished, regardless of the materials or skill check result, would be an improvised explosive device that's the equivalent of a Molotov cocktail (damage 1d6). In general, building explosive devices happens outside of combat or other dramatic situations.

Table 2-1: Building Explosive Devices From Scratch

Type (and damage) of Scratch-Built Explosive	Blast Radius	DC	Cost
Improvised (1d6)	2 m	5	10
Simple (2d6)	2 m	10	100
Moderate (4d6+1)	4 m	15	175
Complex (5d6+2)	6 m	20	250
Powerful (6d6+4)	6 m	25	500
Devastating (8d6+6)	8 m	30	750
Add trap to disable attempts +5, +10, or +15 to DC			

Skills

Staying alive while battling back the incursion of Shadow on the modern world requires numerous skills. *Shadow Chasers* uses a variety of skills from the *Player's Handbook* as well as the new skills listed in this chapter. See page 38 for a full listing of skills used in the *Shadow Chasers* game.

Computer Use (Int)

Use this skill to operate computers and write or modify programs.

Check: Most normal computer operations (such as running a program) don't require a skill check. However, conducting a complex search through numerous databases, writing computer programs to make precise calculations or manipulate data in specific ways, altering existing programs so that they perform better or malfunction, and breaking through computer security are all relatively difficult and require skill checks.

Conduct Complex Search:

Researching a topic on the Internet with a combination of search engines and a lot of web page hits takes time, skill, and some luck. The GM determines how obscure a particular topic is (the more obscure the higher the DC) and what kind of information might be available. In some cases, the GM might require that the character must break into a secure site before conducting a search to obtain certain kinds of information.

Information ranges from general to protected. For example, locating general information about a movie star is easier than gathering specific information (such as the star's date of birth), which is easier than finding

restricted information (such as the star's phone number), which is easier than uncovering protected information (such as the star's credit card number).

Type of Information	DC
General	10
Specific	15
Restricted*	20
Protected*	25

* Usually requires a check to break into (hack) a site before a search can be made.

Write Program: The DC depends on the nature of the program and its purpose, ranging from 15 for simple database programs to 30 for complex analysis or security programs.

Alter Program: It's generally easier to alter an existing program than to create a new one from scratch. The DC depends on what the alteration sets out to accomplish and whether or not the user wants his tampering to be readily obvious, ranging from 10 to 20, with an additional +5 or +10 to hide evidence of the alteration.

Breaking Computer Security:

Also called "hacking," this application of Computer Use can't be used untrained and the character can't Take 20 to accomplish this kind of task. Sometimes a hacker has to beat an opposing computer programmer's check result,

but in general the DC is determined by the quality of the security defending it.

Level of Security	DC
Minimum	15
Average	25
Exceptional	30
Maximum	35

Computer Use requires a full-round action. The GM may determine that some tasks require several rounds, a few minutes, or even longer to accomplish.

You can take 10 when using the Computer Use skill. In cases where there is no penalty for failure, you can take 20.

Drive (Dex)

Use this skill to operate an automobile.

Check: Typical driving tasks don't require checks. Checks are required during combat or chases, to perform unusual maneuvers, or in extreme circumstances.

Drive is a move action. When chasing another car or attempting to lose a car in traffic, make opposed Drive checks. To perform an unusual maneuver or to avoid an obstacle or hazard, the DC can range from 10 (for an average maneuver or hazard) to 25 or more (for a formidable maneuver or hazard).



Table 1-6: The Strong Hero

Level	Base	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Defense
1	0	2	1	0	Bonus feat	3
2	1	3	1	0	+1 Wound	3
3	2	3	1	1	Power strike +1	3
4	3	4	2	1	Bonus feat	4
5	3	4	2	1	—	4
6	4	5	2	2	Extreme effort 1	4
7	5	5	3	2	Bonus feat	5
8	6/1	6	3	2	+1 Wound	5
9	6/1	6	3	3	Power strike +2	5
10	7/2	7	4	3	Extreme effort 2	6
11	8/3	7	4	3	—	6
12	9/4	8	4	4	Bonus feat	6
13	9/4	8	5	4	+1 Wound	7
14	10/5	9	5	4	Power strike +3	7
15	11/6/1	9	5	5	Bonus feat	7
16	12/7/2	10	6	5	—	8
17	12/7/2	10	6	5	+1 Wound	8
18	13/8/3	11	6	6	Extreme effort 3	8
19	14/9/4	11	7	6	—	9
20	15/10/5	12	7	6	Bonus feat	9

Table 1-7: Extreme Effort

Strong Hero Level	Bonus	Penalty to Defense	Uses
5-7	+3	-2	1/session
8-11	+4	-3	2/session
12-15	+5	-4	3/session
16-18	+6	-5	4/session
19-20	+7	-6	5/session

Read/Write Language, Ride (Dex), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: $(2 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.
Skill Points at each additional level: $2 + \text{Int modifier}$.

Vitality

1d4 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Starting Feats

A Strong hero begins play with the Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Bonus Feats

The Strong hero gains bonus feats at 1st, 4th, 7th, 12th, 15th, and 20th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Acrobatic, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Athletic, Endurance, Heroic Surge, Martial Arts, Power Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, or Weapon Focus.

+1 Wound

At 2nd, 8th, 13th, and 17th level, the Strong hero gains an additional Wound Point.

Power Strike

Every round, for as long as the Strong hero has 1 or more vitality points remaining, the Strong hero can add this circumstance bonus either to one attack roll or one damage roll with a melee weapon, but not both. You must declare where the bonus applies, either to attack or damage, at the start of your action.

Extreme Effort

The Strong hero can push himself to make an extreme effort a number of times per game session based on the character's Strong hero level. The effort must relate to either a Strength check or Strength-based skill check, or a melee attack. The effort provides a circumstance bonus based on the character's Strong hero level. Making an extreme effort also hinders the Strong hero with a penalty to Defense for one round, as determined by the character's Strong hero level.

After making an extreme effort, the Strong hero becomes fatigued until the end of the current encounter.



encyclopedias, databases, or other sources of information.

Bonus Language

Smart heroes, in the course of their studies, learn new languages to access more knowledge. Choose a new language at 7th, 11th, and 17th level. Languages can be modern (French, Spanish, Russian, etc.), ancient (Latin, Babylonian, etc.), or strange (arcane, Shadow tongue, etc.)

Instant Mastery

At 2nd level, the Smart hero gains 4 ranks in any Intelligence-based skill in which she currently has no ranks.

Secret

Through research and study, the Smart hero stumbles upon all sorts of applicable knowledge. At 3rd, 9th, and 14th level, the Smart hero chooses one

Table 1-5: The Smart Hero

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack	Bonus	Save	Save	Special	Defense
1	0	0	1	2	Research	1
2	1	0	1	2	Instant Mastery	1
3	2	1	1	3	Secret	2
4	3	1	2	3	Bonus Feat	2
5	3	1	2	3	Skill Emphasis	2
6	4	2	2	4	—	3
7	5	2	3	4	Bonus Language	3
8	6/1	2	3	4	Bonus Feat	3
9	6/1	3	3	5	Secret	4
10	7/2	3	4	5	Skill Emphasis	4
11	8/3	3	4	5	Bonus Language	4
12	9/4	4	4	6	Bonus Feat	5
13	9/4	4	5	6	—	5
14	10/5	4	5	6	Secret	5
15	11/6/1	5	5	7	Skill Emphasis	6
16	12/7/2	5	6	7	Bonus Feat	6
17	12/7/2	5	6	7	Bonus Language	6
18	13/8/3	6	6	8	—	7
19	14/9/4	6	7	8	—	7
20	15/10/5	6	7	8	Skill Emphasis	7

secret from the following list: Secret of survival (+3 Vitality Points), secret of health (+1 Wound Point), secret of inner strength (+1 bonus to Will saves), secret of stamina (+1 bonus to Fortitude saves), secret of danger avoidance (+1 bonus to Reflex save), secret of combat (+1 bonus to attack rolls), secret of speed (+1 dodge bonus to Defense).

Note that the hero must choose a different secret each time.

Bonus Feats

The Smart hero gains bonus feats at 4th, 8th, 12th, and 16th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Awareness, Cautious, Expertise, Gearhead, Sharp-Eyed, Track, Weapon Focus.

Skill Emphasis

The Dedicated hero gains Skill Emphasis bonus feats as she advances in level.

With Skill Emphasis, choose a skill you possess. You get a +3 bonus on all skill checks with that skill. The effects of Skill Emphasis do not stack. Each time you receive this feat, it applies to a new skill.

The Strong Hero

Strong heroes learn to rely on their physical attributes, especially a high Strength score, developing their bodies into powerful, healthy vessels ready to handle any situation that comes their way. Strong heroes excel at hand-to-hand and melee combat, and other activities that best utilize physical power.

Class Skills

Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Drive (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis),



Table 1-4: The Fast Hero

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack	Bonus	Save	Save	Special	Defense
1	0		0	2	0	Lucky (1 per) 1
2	1		0	3	0	Uncanny Dodge 2
3	2		1	3	1	— 2
4	3		1	4	1	Bonus Feat 2
5	3		1	4	1	Evasion 3
6	4		2	5	2	Lucky (2 per) 3
7	5		2	5	2	— 3
8	6/1		2	6	2	Bonus Feat 4
9	6/1		3	6	3	Uncanny Dodge 4
10	7/2		3	7	3	Special Ability 4
11	8/3		3	7	3	Lucky (3 per) 5
12	9/4		4	8	4	Bonus Feat 5
13	9/4		4	8	4	— 5
14	10/5		4	9	4	Skill Mastery 6
15	11/6/1		5	9	5	Lucky (4 per) 6
16	12/7/2		5	10	5	Bonus Feat 6
17	12/7/2		5	10	5	— 7
18	13/8/3		6	11	6	Skill Mastery 7
19	14/9/4		6	11	6	— 7
20	15/10/5		6	12	6	Special Ability 8

Special Ability

At 10th and 20th level, the Fast hero selects a special ability from the following list: Defensive Roll, Improved Evasion, Opportunist, or the Fast hero may gain a feat in place of a special ability. (See the *Player's Handbook*, under the rogue class, for definitions of these special abilities.)

The Smart Hero

The Smart hero exercises her mental abilities to become expert at cerebral endeavors, making the most of a high Intelligence score. Professors, scientists, and doctors all fall under this class, using a variety of education, research, and natural intelligence to make their way in the world.

Class Skills

Appraise (Int), Computer Use (Int), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Knowledge (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: $(8 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at each additional level: $8 + \text{Int modifier}$.

Vitality

1d4 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Starting Feats

A Smart hero begins play with Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Research

You get to add your Smart level as a circumstance bonus to any Knowledge check whenever you can utilize your ability to search through libraries,

Uncanny Dodge

At 2nd level, the Fast hero retains her Dexterity bonus to Defense (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an unseen attacker. At 9th level, the Fast hero can no longer be flanked.

Bonus Feats

The Fast hero gains bonus feats at 4th, 8th, 12th, and 16th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Acrobatic, Ambidexterity, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack), Expertise, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Nimble, Point-Blank Shot, Run, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

effects of Skill Focus do not stack. Each time you receive this feat, it applies to a new skill.

Heart

The Dedicated hero possesses a great deal of self-confidence and courage. Because of this, once per game session the Dedicated hero can focus his will and gain a circumstance bonus based on his innate belief in himself and his abilities. The bonus ranges from +1 at 2nd level to +4 at 18th level. The bonus can be applied to any skill check, ability check, or attack roll.

Inspire Confidence

Beginning at 3rd level, a Dedicated hero can use oratory to inspire confidence in allies. This bolsters the allies and improves their chances of success. An ally must listen to and observe the Dedicated hero for a full round for the inspiration to take hold. The effect lasts for 5 rounds. The Dedicated hero can inspire a number of allies equal to half his Dedicated hero levels, rounded up. He can inspire confidence once per day for every 4 levels of Dedicated hero he possesses (once per day from 1st to 4th level, twice per day from 5th to 8th level, and so on).

An ally inspired with confidence gains a +2 morale bonus to saving throws and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls.

The Dedicated hero can't inspire confidence in himself. The ability only aids his allies.

Bonus Feats

The Dedicated hero gains bonus feats at 4th, 8th, 12th, and 16th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Alertness, Animal Affinity, Awareness, Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Sharp-Eyed, Weapon Focus.

Inspire Greatness

Beginning at 9th level, a Dedicated hero can inspire greatness in an ally, granting extra fighting capability. This works similar to inspire confidence, except it affects but a single ally. An ally inspired with greatness gains +2d6 temporary vitality points, a +2 competence bonus on attacks, and a +2 morale bonus to saving throws. The effect lasts for 5 rounds. The Dedicated hero can inspire greatness once per day. For every three Dedicated hero levels attained beyond 9th level, the Dedicated hero can inspire greatness in one additional ally.

The Dedicated hero can't inspire greatness in himself. The ability only aids his allies.

Slippery Mind

As per the rogue special ability described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Immune to Charm and Compulsion

At 20th level, because his will is his own, the Dedicated hero gains immunity to all charm and compulsion effects.

The Fast Hero

A character takes levels in this class if she wants to make the most of a high Dexterity score. Training to take advantage of natural agility and to hone quick reflexes means better stealth and defenses, as well as a concentration in athletics that require speed, grace, and hand-eye coordination.

Class Skills

Balance (Dex), Craft (Int), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pocket (Dex), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Ride (Dex), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: $(2 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at each additional level: $2 + \text{Int modifier}$.

Vitality

1d4 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Starting Feats

A Fast hero begins play with Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Lucky

The Fast hero is often as lucky as she is good at something. Therefore, starting at 2nd level, the Fast hero can reroll any failed ability check, skill check, attack roll, or saving throw. (In other words, any task resolution die roll, which are die rolls using a d20.) The second result must be used, regardless of whether it is better or worse than the first. The Fast hero can use this ability a number of times per game session, depending on her level, but only once in any given encounter. So, at 2nd level, the Fast hero can use lucky once per game session; at 18th level, she can use it up to four times in a game session (but only once in any encounter).

Evasion and Skill Mastery

See the definitions for these special abilities in the *Player's Handbook*.

While selecting your hero's class take a moment to consider the prerequisites for the prestige classes offered in Chapter 4.



skills. The GM may disallow any favor deemed to be disruptive to the game.

Coordinate

A Charismatic hero has a knack for getting people to work together. When the Charismatic hero can aid others and give directions, she provides a bonus to the task at hand by making an aid another check. This bonus is in addition to the normal aid another bonus (+2), and it increases as the noble gains levels. So, the noble provides a total +3 bonus at 4th level (+2 aid another bonus, +1 cooperation bonus), a +4 bonus at 8th level, etc.

Coordinate can't be used to assist in combat.

Table 1-3: The Dedicated Hero

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Defense
1	0	1	0	2	Skill Focus	2
2	1	1	0	3	Heart +1	2
3	2	1	1	3	Inspire Confidence	3
4	3	2	1	4	Bonus Feat	3
5	3	2	1	4	Skill Focus	3
6	4	2	2	5	—	4
7	5	3	2	5	Heart +2	4
8	6/1	3	2	6	Bonus Feat	4
9	6/1	3	3	6	Inspire Greatness	5
10	7/2	4	3	7	Slippery Mind	5
11	8/3	4	3	7	—	5
12	9/4	4	4	8	Bonus Feat	6
13	9/4	5	4	8	Skill Focus	6
14	10/5	5	4	9	Heart +3	6
15	11/6/1	5	5	9	—	7
16	12/7/2	6	5	10	Bonus Feat	7
17	12/7/2	6	5	10	Skill Focus	7
18	13/8/3	6	6	11	Heart +4	8
19	14/9/4	7	6	11	—	8
20	15/10/5	7	6	12	Immune to charm and compulsion	

Bonus Feats

The Charismatic hero gains bonus feats at 4th, 8th, 12th, and 16th level. These bonus feats must be selected from the following list: Fame, Frightful Presence, Infamy, Influence, Mimic, Persuasive, Sharp-Eyed, Trustworthy.

The Dedicated Hero

A character takes levels in this class if he wants to focus on a specific field of expertise for a time, and get the best all-around saving throws. A level in this class represents a focus on Wisdom-based benefits and skills, as well as keen senses and an awareness of the world around you.

Class Skills

Computer Use (Int), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at each additional level: 4 + Int modifier.

Vitality

1d4 plus Constitution modifier per level.

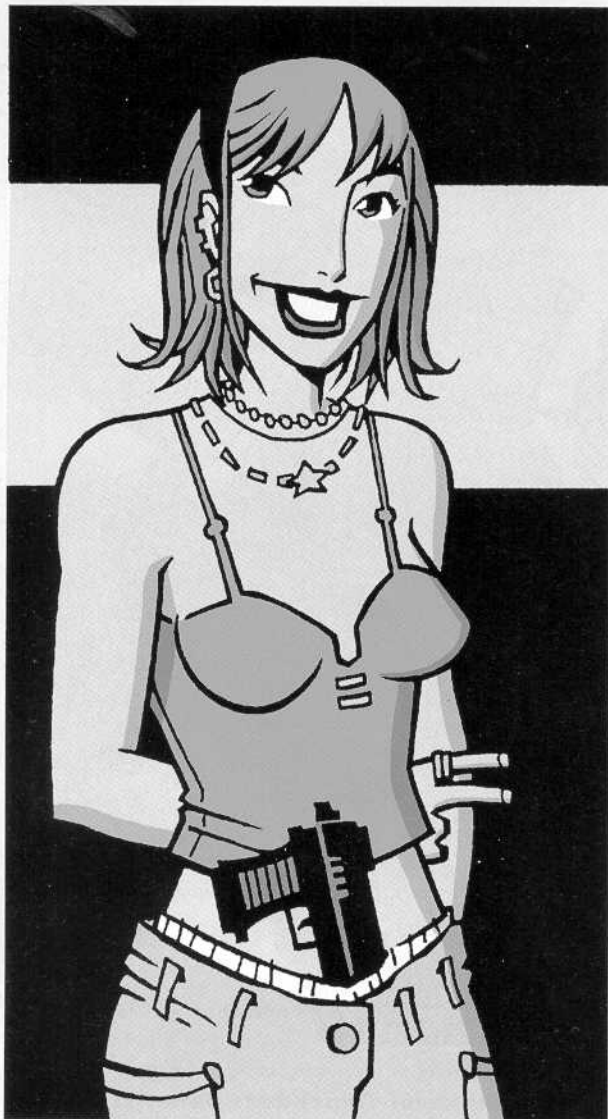
Starting Feats

A Dedicated hero begins play with Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Skill Focus

The Dedicated hero gains Skill Focus bonus feats as she advances in level.

With Skill Focus, choose a skill you possess. You get a +2 bonus on all skill checks with that skill. The



The Charismatic Hero

A character takes levels in this class if he wants to take advantage of a high Charisma score or wants to spend some time concentrating on Charisma-based skills. This class instinctively knows how to connect with others, influence their actions, and win their support through debate, compromise, or seduction. Personal magnetism, interaction techniques, and a touch of charm combine in the Charismatic hero.

Class Skills

Animal Empathy (Cha), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidation (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at each additional level: $4 + \text{Int modifier}$.

Vitality

1d4 plus Constitution modifier per level.

Starting Feats

A Charismatic hero begins play with the Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Favors

The Charismatic hero has the ability to call in favors from those she knows. By making a favor check, the Charismatic hero can call upon contacts to gain important information without going through the time and trouble of doing a lot of research. Favors also can be used to acquire the loan of equipment or documents from influential acquaintances.

To call in a favor, the Charismatic hero makes a favor check. Roll a d20 plus your favor bonus (+1 at 1st level, +2 at 3rd level, etc.). The GM sets the DC based on the scope of the favor being requested. The DC ranges from 10 for a simple favor to as high as 25 for highly dangerous, expensive, or illegal favors. The Charismatic hero can't take 10 or take 20 on this check, nor can she retry the check for the same (or virtually the same) favor. Note that favors should help advance the plot of an adventure. A favor that would circumvent an adventure should always be unavailable to a character, regardless of the results of a favor check.

A Charismatic hero can try to call in a favor a number of times in a week of game time that's equal to half her Charismatic hero levels, rounded up. So, as a 1st-level Charismatic hero, she can attempt to call in a single favor, while as a 7th-level Charismatic hero she can attempt to call in favors as many as four times from different contacts.

The GM should carefully monitor the Charismatic hero's use of favors to ensure that this ability isn't abused. The success or failure of a mission shouldn't hinge on the use of a favor, and calling in favors shouldn't replace good roleplaying or the use of other

Table 1-2: The Charismatic Hero

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Defense
1	0	1	0	1	Favor +1	2
2	1	1	0	1	Coordinate +1	3
3	2	1	0	2	Favor +2	3
4	3	2	1	2	Bonus Feat	3
5	3	2	1	2	—	4
6	4	2	1	3	Favor +3	4
7	5	3	2	3	Coordinate +2	4
8	6/1	3	2	3	Bonus Feat	5
9	6/1	3	2	4	Favor +4	5
10	7/2	4	3	4	Bonus class skill	5
11	8/3	4	3	4	—	6
12	9/4	4	3	5	Bonus Feat	6
13	9/4	5	4	5	Coordinate +3	6
14	10/5	5	4	5	Favor +5	7
15	11/6/1	5	4	6	—	7
16	12/7/2	6	5	6	Bonus Feat	7
17	12/7/2	6	5	6	Coordinate +4	8
18	13/8/3	6	5	7	Favor +6	8
19	14/9/4	7	6	7	—	8
20	15/10/5	7	6	7	Favor +7	9

Smart hero/5th-level Dedicated hero is an 8th-level character.

XP: The number of experience points required to attain this level.

Class skill max ranks: The maximum possible number of ranks in each skill for a character of this level. A skill counts as a class skill if it's on the class list of any of the character's classes.

Cross-class skill max ranks: As above, but the maximum for skills that don't appear on the character's class list.

Feats: The level at which characters can choose another feat.

Ability Increases: The level at which characters can improve the ability score of their choice by 1 point.

Classes

Classes have a slightly different structure in *Shadow Chasers* to better represent the wide range of skills and knowledge to which modern people have access. Each class level, therefore, represents an area of expertise in which that character trains, and multi-classing can be done freely and without restriction.

There are five classes available, presented in the following order:

The Charismatic Hero: Levels in this class demonstrate an ability to win friends and influence people with charm, confidence, and natural charisma.

The Dedicated Hero: A level or two in this class shows that the hero is devoted to a cause, an ideal, or a purpose, and is often wise beyond her years.

The Fast Hero: Levels in this class show a mastery and reliance on agility and dexterity, as well as stealth, quick reflexes, and martial arts that stress self-defense instead of combat.

The Smart Hero: A level or two in this class demonstrates education and reasoning skills, as well as formal training in specific intellectual pursuits.

The Strong Hero: Levels in this class show a mastery and reliance on physical strength, including physical training, self-defense, and martial arts that stress brute force.



Table 1-1: Experience and Level-Dependent Benefits

Character Level	XP Total	Class Skill Max Ranks	Cross-class Skill Max Ranks	Feats	Ability Increase
1st	0	4	2	1st	—
2nd	1,000	5	2.5	—	—
3rd	3,000	6	3	2nd	—
4th	6,000	7	3.5	—	1st
5th	10,000	8	4	—	—
6th	15,000	9	4.5	3rd	—
7th	21,000	10	5	—	—
8th	28,000	11	5.5	—	2nd
9th	36,000	12	6	4th	—
10th	45,000	13	6.5	—	—
11th	55,000	14	7	—	—
12th	66,000	15	7.5	5th	3rd
13th	78,000	16	8	—	—
14th	91,000	17	8.5	—	—
15th	105,000	18	9	6th	—
16th	120,000	19	9.5	—	4th
17th	136,000	20	10	—	—
18th	153,000	21	10.5	7th	—
19th	171,000	22	11	—	—
20th	190,000	23	11.5	—	5th

Hero Generation

Generating *Shadow Chasers* heroes is as easy as creating a new character for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. You'll need a copy of the *Player's Handbook* to help guide you through the process.

Abilities

Use the rules presented in Chapter 1 of the *Player's Handbook* to generate ability scores for your character.

Races

All characters in a *Shadow Chasers* campaign are human. They can be of any ethnic persuasion, either male or female. There are no favored classes in *Shadow Chasers*. If your Gamemaster allows it, you might want to consider adding a Shadow Blood template to your character. See Chapter 4: Advanced Characters for more details.

Characters and Language

Characters begin play speaking the primary language used in the area of the world in which you have set your campaign. Typically, this means English. All other world languages are available for characters to learn. In addition, Shadow has a language all its own that is often

seen in ancient ruins and within arcane tomes.

The 1st-Level Character

The 1st-level hero comes together as you combine ability scores with a class. Here's a summary of how to generate some of the new details.

Vitality Points: For the 1st-level hero, Vitality Points equal the maximum for the Vitality Die the class receives, plus any modifier for Constitution. Therefore, a Fast Hero (1d4 Vitality Die) with a Con score of 12 (+1 bonus) starts play with 5 Vitality Points.

Wound Points: Wound Points are equal to the character's Constitution score. The Fast Hero described above has 12 Wound Points.

Defense: A 1st-level hero determines his or her Defense score by adding the following elements—10 + class bonus + Dexterity modifier + size modifier (0 in the case of most humans) + any miscellaneous modifier that may apply.

Action Points: A character begins play with 1d4+1 Action Points.

Multiclass Characters

Each time your character earns a new level, you can choose to take another level in your previous class or choose a new class. Adding a new class broadens your repertoire of abilities, but at the expense of focused expertise in a single class.

Level Dependent Benefits

Beyond the skills, attack bonuses, saving throw bonuses, and other class features outlined for each class, characters gain other benefits from advancing in levels. The table on the following page identifies how many experience points (XP) are required to attain each level and what benefits characters get at each level, regardless of their character class.

Multiclass characters use their total character level on this table. In other words, a 3rd-level

after the dawn of civilization, when the first incursion of Shadow occurred. Others believe that it came into existence during the last major incursion some 125 years ago. And there are those who, no matter how many times they encounter an agent of the Fellowship, believe that the whole organization is nothing more than a myth propagated by the government or perhaps some Shadow agency.

Whatever the truth (and it can be different in every campaign), the Fellowship sometimes gets involved in the lives of the Shadow Chasers. A mysterious contact might show up with pertinent information or a missing tome that contains the answer to the current situation. An unnamed Shadow Chaser might arrive, bearing the sigil of the Fellowship and offering weapons or cash or magic items as needed. All the Fellowship asks for in return is that, when the day comes, the Shadow Chasers take on a mission for the Fellowship. Some Shadow Chasers liken making a deal with the Fellowship to making a deal with the devil, but sometimes you don't have a choice when the monsters are smashing down the door.

Special Units and Private Investigators

Sometimes, heroes belong to a team of specialists gathered specifically to combat the intrusion of Shadow. They might work for a branch of the government, or the military, or a law enforcement agency. They might be associated with a federal, state, or local agency. They might even be tied to a private corporation, a university, or a charitable organization. Regardless, the team consists of a mix of characters and careers needed to best confront the forces of Shadow.

Look to *Special Unit 2*, *The X-Files*, *The Invisible Man*, *Good vs. Evil*, or *Stargate SG1* for examples of the special team. Other inspiration can be drawn from *NYPD Blue*, the various *Law & Order* shows, and *Mission: Impossible*, though you'll need to throw the

supernatural element into these models yourself.

The special unit works for a specific agency, department, or branch of whichever level of the public or private sector you determine makes the most sense for your campaign. The unit sometimes receives missions from its superiors; other times it follows up its own leads to investigate possible Shadow incursions. The special unit might have access to resources that wouldn't normally be available, or the team could be working on a tight budget due to a variety of constraints and disbelief at the highest level of the organization. Either way, the special unit applies superior firepower and a formal mindset to the task of locating, investigating, and eradicating those Shadow creatures that prey upon the citizens under the team's jurisdiction.

Another possibility for a group of heroes is to follow the private investigator route. In this campaign, the heroes work for themselves, seeking to meet their expenses or even make a profit in their fight against the denizens of Shadow. They might have a wealthy patron that believes in their quest, or they might be struggling to make their monthly rent payments as they wait for the next case to fall into their collective laps. They could solve crimes when they aren't dealing with monsters, or they might work for a tabloid covering strange news stories. Either way, it's tough making a living when the majority of the world doesn't believe in the threat you claim to be working against.

Ghostbusters, *Friday the 13th: The Series*, *The Chronicle*, and *Poltergeist: The Series* are examples of this model. The heroes might have to supplement their income by taking on mundane cases or by serving as consultants to the local law enforcement agencies regarding strange and mysterious cases that may or may not be linked to Shadow. The heroes might never know when a case could slip from the bounds of the mundane and slide deep into the realm of nightmares.

Game Rules

This **d20 System** RPG utilizes the basic mechanics as set forth in the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game. This article presents a number of alterations to better use the system in a modern setting. With this article and the core D&D books, you can have a *Shadow Chasers* campaign up and running in no time.

New Twists on the d20 System

The D&D rules serve as the basis for playing *Shadow Chasers*. As you read through this minigame, however, you'll notice some new ways to use the **d20 System**. We'll explain those alterations as we go along, but here are the basic changes to be aware of:

- o The Hit Points System has been modified to use the Wounds and Vitality System originally described in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*.

- o Instead of Armor Class, characters have a Defense rating tied to their class that improves as characters gain levels.

- o Armor reduces damage instead of adding to Defense.

- o Classes available to hero characters are very different from the ones available in D&D. Multiclassing is encouraged and has no restrictions. Prestige classes form an integral part of the advancement and development of hero characters.

- o Characters can use Action Points to influence their chances of success when making attacks, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks.

- o The alignment system is optional. Use it if you want, but most beings in the world of *Shadow Chasers* can't be categorized as belonging to a particular alignment. They can have tendencies, of course, but rarely are there any absolutes.

There are other slight differences, but these are the biggest ones. In the end, however, you still roll a D20, add a modifier, and try to get the highest result you can in order to attack an opponent, use a skill, or make a saving throw.

Rumors and legends say that it can be as bad to get on the good side of the Fellowship as it can be to get on its bad side. Maybe worse.

them while protecting the world at large. For this reason, the Chosen One needs a strong group of heroes for support, including a wide range of skills and classes. A Smart hero and a Dedicated hero are important, as is a Mentor to provide guidance and advice as the battle against Shadow escalates.

Other Shadow Chasers

While it may sometimes feel like your Shadow Chasers are alone against the darkness, there are others around the world who carry on the same fight. Like the members of your team, they have been called to rail against the denizens of Shadow, to defend the light, to protect the night. However, because Shadow is fluid and deceptive, different Shadow Chasing teams find it difficult to trust each other or work together—mostly because nothing is ever exactly the way it appears to be.

Even so, sometimes another Shadow Chaser seeks you out, either looking for information on a specific threat or to provide you with knowledge that might aid you in your struggles. Rarer still, a menace appears out of Shadow that's just too big for a single team to handle. Then some agency or organization intervenes to compel two or more Shadow Chaser teams to work together.

Not everyone who can see the things of Shadow for what they really are can be called Shadow Chasers. There are those who have become aware of the danger but aren't equipped or capable enough to take up arms against the monsters. These individuals, once discovered, can become the best friends a Shadow Chaser team can have. They provide information, whispering the word on the street to the Shadow Chasers, letting them know when something bad has invaded the neighborhood or taken up residence in the abandoned subway

station. They see, but they aren't heroes. They're clerks at all-night convenience stores or newspaper stands. They're homeless eccentrics and owners of small shops that sell the strangest items imaginable. Sometimes, they're patients at psychiatric hospitals who can stay lucid enough to answer a question or two or reveal the details of an apocalyptic dream whenever the Shadow Chasers come by to visit.

Once in a while someone of wealth and influence peers through the darkness and becomes a patron for the Shadow Chasers. Of course, these individuals usually want something in return for the help they provide—protection, information, or even every ounce of loyalty that their money can buy. Not all Shadow Chasers can be bought, but even the most noble defenders of the night need to eat and pay the rent. Not to mention, weapons and ammunition don't grow on trees.

Finally, those who first experience the parting of the veil of obscurity are often drawn to the Shadow Chasers for guidance and confirmation that what they've seen is real. Some of these individuals might become Shadow Chasers in their own right, perhaps even joining a Chaser team, if they can accept the truth and find a way to come to grips with the mission that destiny has placed before them.

Resources

Shadow Chasers don't have a lot to rely on. Most of the world thinks they're crazy. Everyone they meet could be an enemy in disguise. And when someone does take them and their mission seriously, there's a good chance it's an ally of Shadow or some private or government institute set on studying the phenomenon or shutting the Shadow Chasers down.

Even so, there are those who provide money and other resources to the Shadow Chasers when the need arises. Patrons who have their own score to settle with the denizens of Shadow, or clients willing to pay for the help the Shadow Chasers provide. Some Shadow Chasers try to live normal lives between encounters with monsters, holding down jobs to pay for food and lodging. Others travel the world, seeking out Shadow intrusions wherever they occur and living hand to mouth as best they can.

Even with a wealthy patron or a steady stream of income, typical Shadow Chaser teams don't have a lot of resources to fall back on. Sure, they've each got a weapon or two, and access to some lab or library or arcane workshop when an adventure takes them in that direction. But often a portion of an adventure revolves around the Shadow Chasers finding or borrowing or buying or making or stealing whatever it is they need to take the monster down.

And, when all else fails, the Shadow Chasers can ask the Fellowship for help, though most pray they never need that much help in the first place.

The Fellowship

The Fellowship. It is a name that even the toughest Shadow Chaser barely whispers, for the rumors and legends say that it can be as bad to get on the good side of the Fellowship as it can be to get on its bad side. Maybe worse.

What is the Fellowship? To many Shadow Chasers, it's nothing more than a story, a tall tale to scare new Chasers over beer and pretzels. A story, that is, until the Fellowship comes calling with a mission or a demand or an offer of help when you need it the most.

What is the Fellowship? It's an ancient, secret organization of Shadow Chasers. Some say the Fellowship was formed shortly

Their minds can't comprehend that creatures of darkness and evil can actually exist, and so they see what they expect to see: a large dog, a scurrying rat, a somewhat bulky and ugly bruiser in a business suit—never a hellhound or a dire rat or a troll. When they do register that something is unusual and unworldly, these people dismiss it as a costume or a trick of the light or a momentary bout of madness.

The second type can sometimes catch a glimpse of a denizen of Shadow in its true form. These glimpses occur at the corner of their eyes, or in the sweep of a headlight, or in the blink of an eye. They are partially Aware. These individuals sometimes go mad because of the fleeting visions they see. Others maintain a hold on their sanity, but secretly believe that monsters are real. They try to go about their lives as best they can, but they often leave a light burning as they attempt to slip into a peaceful sleep that can never truly be theirs.

The third type has no problem peering past the veil of Shadow. They see the monsters, and more often than not the monsters are also aware of them. Seers, parapsychologists, fortune-tellers, mystics, the insane, and others attuned to Shadow emerge from this group. Finally, many of the heroes that arise to battle against the denizens of Shadow belong to this group of people who are fully Aware.

Heroes Emerge

For whatever reason—fate, divine intervention, genetics, an ancient curse, or even coincidence—some small subset of the human race is genetically predisposed to Awareness. These individuals fall into either of the two latter types of people in the world; they either possess partial or full Awareness. What unites them, what makes them the same regardless of which category they belong to, is their desire to protect the world from the denizens of Shadow. Now, not all of these heroes are altruistic or

even good in the traditional sense. They battle against the darkness for self-preservation, profit, or revenge as often as because it's the right thing to do.

Shadow Chasers go through a similar evolution. An event—some chance meeting with the things of Shadow—triggers the Awareness in an individual. That individual is then motivated by hatred, revenge, or a genuine desire to represent the light, and so begins a crusade that lasts until that individual draws his or her last breath, for no one expects to defeat the denizens of Shadow. They can only hope to fight back and preserve the light for another hour, day, or year.

Eventually, the *Shadow Chasers* meet up with others like themselves. There is safety in numbers, as well as strength, and it makes sense to combine efforts in the unending war against the creatures of the night. But make no mistake, the *Shadow Chasers* are the hunted as often as the hunters. They are constantly on the move, seeking monsters to defeat while trying not to become the latest casualties in this unending war. The life of a Shadow Chaser isn't glamorous. Most people who have even the faintest hint of their existence consider them to be charlatans, con artists, or lunatics. They struggle on, however, never ready to go quietly into the night.

The Shadow Chasers Campaign

What kind of campaign can you create using *Shadow Chasers*? It's easy to adapt any heroic horror setting using these rules, but here are the basics for the ultimate campaign of Champions of Light versus Creatures of Darkness.

Shadow Chasing

One character in the group is special in some way, chosen by fate or destiny or bloodline or some higher power to battle against the evil denizens of Shadow. The other heroes support this Chosen One out of friendship, need, or because they were also selected by the same agency of fate to

Who are the Shadow Chasers?

The Shadow Chasers are heroes who know and understand that monsters exist. Only they have the skills and abilities necessary to combat these supernatural menaces.

What Do the Shadow Chasers Do?

They help defend the world against the denizens of Shadow, fighting each incursion they come across with whatever weapons and magic they can muster.

Where Do the Shadow Chasers Operate?

Wherever you want them to. The whole world is threatened by the denizens of Shadow. Your Shadow Chasers can operate in a single town or city, or they can roam the world looking for monsters to destroy.

When Does a Shadow Chasers Campaign Take Place?

In the here and now. Shadow Chasers fight monsters in the modern world.

Why Do the Shadow Chasers Fight Monsters?

Because somebody has to, and because they know what's going on (or at least they know more than the average person). And, usually, a Shadow Chaser is called to his or her mission by some higher authority or feeling of destiny.

rally against the forces of darkness and evil.

The Chosen One must eventually select the Shadow Slayer prestige class. This prestige class represents the character's role and status as the chosen defender of the light.

The Chosen One and his or her group normally work independently of any organized effort to defeat Shadow. While the group sometimes receives tips or assignments from some higher power (usually through dreams or visions), most of the time the group simply seeks out Shadow intrusions and works to defeat

the monsters usually means that the monsters can see you.

As the denizens of Shadow spread across the world, heroes arise to combat them. In every generation, a small number stand out due to circumstances and the bad luck of having been able to see the things of Shadow for what they really are. Of this number, those with the will and determination to make a difference, to fight back and live despite the encroaching madness, become the champions of the light. They go by many names, but we know them as the Shadow Chasers.

By the start of the new millennium, the name that had started out as a mock title had taken on a deeper, resonating meaning. Of course, the rest of the world considers these champions (when they notice them at all) to be eccentric, weird, or even certifiably insane. Many snicker behind their backs or laugh at them openly. "Stop chasing shadows," they say, "and get a real job." Few believe that the Shadows contain horrors that need to be chased—and staked, and shot, and hacked to pieces so they can't get back up and kill again.

The truth of the matter is, the heroes can't stop chasing the shadows. To do so would be to give up, to let the Things of Darkness go unchecked, and thus damn the world to a hell we can't even begin to imagine.

The World of Shadows

Shadow Chasers is set in a world that looks exactly like the real world we know and love. It consists of simple, everyday things that we tend to take for granted. We've grown up with them and expect them to be there whenever we want them. They make us comfortable and content.

Burgers. Cell phones. DVDs. A noise in the basement.

The world of *Shadow Chasers* mirrors our world. The political climate, the entertainment landscape, and even the physical geography matches almost exactly. The only differences are the ones the Gamemaster (GM) introduces to create a fictional

persona of our world, and the eventual changes that occur due to the actions of the heroes.

The Internet. Flat-screen TVs. Pizza. A dark shape, wrong in every way, glimpsed from the corner of your eye.

Other differences begin to creep into the picture as you take a closer look at this fictionalized version of our world. For one thing, even the brightest days seem to have a gloom hanging over them, and the light is dimmer, less vibrant than in the world we know. For another thing, the dark of night is deeper, more isolated than anything experienced in our world. The night as seen in the world of Shadow muffles all sounds, absorbs all light, and reverberates with strange, distant echoes of nightmare sounds that make the hair on your arms stand on end.

Notebook computers. Tacos. CDs. Sharp, rending claws that caress your flesh with ribbons of blood.

Finally, the major differences between the world of *Shadow Chasers* and the real world centers on the denizens of Shadow. In the world of *Shadow Chasers*, monsters lurk in the dark recesses. They prowl the night. They strike, instilling terror and fomenting an unidentifiable fear in everyone, everywhere. Supernatural horrors fill the night. Mythic creatures roam the silent countryside and nest beneath the city streets. Vampires, zombies, and ghosts—among a host of other terrible beings of Shadow—hunt the innocent, the weak, and the scared.

Inline skates. Microwave ovens. Hellhounds tearing chunks of dripping meat from your still-struggling body as you succumb to a slow, painful death ...

The Three Key Conceits

Three conceits form the basis of the *Shadow Chasers* campaign setting:

- o Monsters exist in a world that otherwise mirrors our own;
- o Shadow obscures and hides the true form of the monsters from the world at large;

o Heroes emerge to protect the world and fight the monsters.

Take the real world, mix in the above twists, and you've got a ready-to-populate campaign setting that's as familiar to Gamemasters and players as our own world, and as fantastic and terrifying as your own imaginations can make it. Here's a brief look at how these conceits work in the campaign.

Monsters Exist

Grab a copy of the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Monster Manual*. Any of the creatures detailed in that tome can become a denizen of Shadow in a *Shadow Chasers* campaign. From the more traditional monsters of horror such as the werewolf, vampire, and mummy, to the creatures more common to a D&D game like mind flayers, bugbears, and displacer beasts, the *Monster Manual* contains a multitude of ... things ... to fuel the most terrifying nightmares. Imagine any or all of these monsters set loose in a world that looks and feels much like our own. The chaos would be spectacular.

A gang of vile wererats terrorizes a downtown neighborhood. A powerful vampire lord controls a crime syndicate that operates throughout the city. A carrion crawler hunts those who visit an uptown park in the dead of night. These monstrous threats and more slip from Shadow to prey upon people all across the world.

Shadow Obscures

Though the monsters exist, few people can see them as they truly are—at least not until the final moments when the terror reaches a crescendo and the creature reveals itself to bask in its victim's dizzying fear before delivering the killing blow. The properties of Shadow work in conjunction with the natural defenses of the human mind to shield people from the horrible monsters that walk among them.

Three types of people occupy the world. The first type is blissfully ignorant of the nature of the threat that encroaches on us all. They can't see past the shadows.



Chasing Shadows

Night falls, and the world prepares to sleep. It will be a troubled sleep, however, tormented by nightmares made all the more terrifying because they are real. Monsters roam the night, emerging from deep shadows to prey upon the weak, the innocent, and the lost. Monsters exist. You know it now. It's a fact you've come to understand on a profound level. Somewhere deep inside, you've always known it. Now you also believe it.

There are others like you, companions who have also peered into the shadows and seen the horrors lurking there. Together, you're ready to protect the world from the monsters, to keep the night safe.

You are the Shadow Chasers, and this is your story.

What is *Shadow Chasers*?

Shadow Chasers is a preview campaign setting for the upcoming **D20 MODERN** roleplaying game. The **D20 MODERN** RPG contains all the rules for playing any flavor of modern-day fantasy. If you know how to play D&D or any other **d20 System** game, you already know how to play **D20 MODERN**. The difference is in the details. There are a few unique elements to the rules that better adapt the **d20**

System to a contemporary setting, and we'll cover enough of those in this preview to get you started. *Shadow Chasers* is one specific take on modern-day fantasy. The setting focuses on heroic horror in the tradition of *Resident Evil*, *Special Unit 2*, *Alone in the Dark*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

The world of *Shadow Chasers* looks just like the world you know. It's the modern world we live in, with a twist that makes it fun, exciting, and a little bit terrifying. In the world of *Shadow Chasers*, you see, the monsters under the bed, in the closet, and hiding in the dark pools of blackness between the woefully inadequate and widely spaced street lamps are decidedly and unequivocally real. Vampires and werewolves,

they're out there, preying on humanity with monstrous ferocity. Ghosts and goblins, they exist, haunting the shadows behind fast-food restaurants, convenience stores, and other places full of life and light.

The truth remains hidden from the world at large, though. Most people can't fathom the Things of Darkness, and so they either can't or won't see them for what they really are. This veil of self-deception and delusion keeps the majority of the world functioning despite the horrors around us. Those who can see through the shadows, however, often find ridicule, scorn, and even madness on the other side. There's danger as well in knowing the true nature of the world, for being able to see

44 Chapter 4: Advanced Characters

As your Shadow Chaser gains experience, he'll further hone his skills with one of five prestige classes. Will he become the Shadow Slayer, or will he plumb the secrets of magic in the modern world?

52 Chapter 5: Weapons & Combat

Put away that longsword and whip out an Uzi. It's time to take the fight to the Shadow itself.

56 Chapter 6: Venturing into Shadows

Don the flak jacket and sharpen the stakes. Your Shadow Chaser career is about to begin.

Game Design: Bill Slavicsek

Editing & Art Direction: Erik Mona

Graphic Design: Andy James

Cover Artist: Jim Mahfood

Interior Artists:

Kalman Andrasofszky,

Leanne Buckley, Jim Mahfood

Logo Design: Sean Glenn

Special Thanks to the Thursday Night Shadow Chasers: Michele Carter, Dale Donovan, Jeff Grubb, Thomas M. Reid, Ed Stark, and Larry Weiner. Gratitude to Chris Perkins for ideas and advice, and an additional thanks to Rich Redman for suggestions about modern weapons.

SHADOW CHASERS

Heroic Modern Horror in a Darkened World

A Campaign Setting for the
D20 Modern Roleplaying Game

This *Polyhedron* d20 Mini-Game requires the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual* to play. Unless noted in the text, *Polyhedron* Mini-Games adapt the standard D&D rules and conventions to nonstandard settings and genres. Unless specifically noted in the text, this Mini-Game follows the core D&D rules. If you know how to play *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, you'll pick up the rules of this game in moments.

Shadow Chasers utilizes game mechanics developed for the new *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison and the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* by Bill Slavicsek, Andy Collins, and JD Wiker. This Wizards of the Coast game contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

22 Introduction: Chasing Shadows

Foul creatures of haunted legends stalk city streets in search of prey. A handful of protectors, so-called Shadow Chasers, band together to stop the evil tide that only they can perceive.

28 Chapter 1: Hero Generation

Your Shadow Chaser starts with one of five hero classes. Will smarts or brawn make the difference between the world we cherish or an existence consumed by Shadow?

36 Chapter 2: Skills

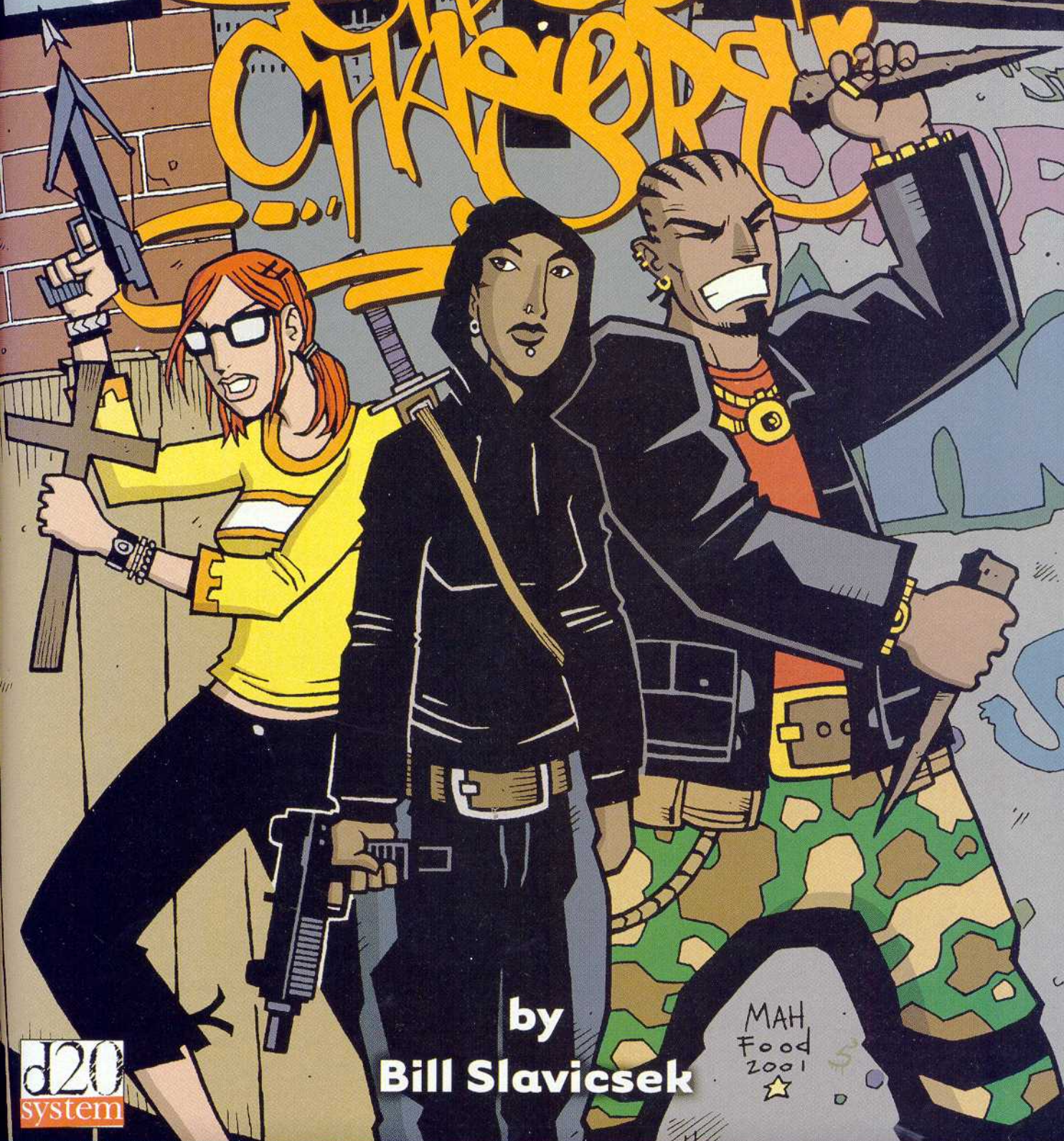
Sometimes the difference between life and death hinges on which side has the skills required to survive.

40 Chapter 3: Feats

Whether it's an Awareness of the evil around us or an uncanny knack with machines, Shadow Chasers require remarkable abilities to see them through the day.

Requires the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS *Player's Handbook*

UNSHADOWN CHAMPION



d20
system

by
Bill Slavicsek

MAH
Food
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★

HEROIC MODERN HORROR IN A DARKENED WORLD

Web Wanderings

Scouring the Net for Cool RPG Advice Since 1994 • By Ed Gibson

Welcome back to *Web Wanderings*, *Polyhedron's* regular survey of Internet sites that can help you improve your roleplaying campaigns. Many of the coolest sites featured in *Web Wanderings* come directly from you, the reader. Drop us a line at polyhedron@wizards.com and let us know what sites you use when perfecting your game.

This issue's first site was suggested by Peter Parker of Ohio, on the LIVING GREYHAWK™ mailing list (<http://groups.yahoo.com>). Fans of the d20 System will want to check out <http://www.opengamingfoundation.org/srd.html>. This is the System Reference Document for the d20 System. The page contains all the documents that have been released or are under review by Wizards of the Coast as part of the Open Gaming License, the initiative which underlies the entire d20/Open Gaming movement. The documents available on this site contain the standard monsters, spells, magic items, and character class information found in *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*. You can also access combat basics, healing, and other rules.

Warning! Personal use of this material should not be a problem, but you need to comply with the terms of the Open Gaming License if you plan to distribute the material in any way. See <http://www.wizards.com/D20/main.asp?x=welcome,3> for additional information on the Open Gaming License and the legal requirements of the license. You can download the

legal documents, FAQ's, and the released System Reference Documents from the Wizards site.

Would you like to bug your characters? Maybe they're stranded in the middle of a desert after a plane crash or a bandit raid has killed the animals in their caravan. It's almost 150 degrees Fahrenheit in the sun and ants come swarming over them. The *Cataglyphis* genera of ants lives in the Sahara Desert and is capable of functioning in this heat. You can check out various insect records at the University of Florida Book of Insect Records (<http://ufbir.ifas.ufl.edu>). The most cold-tolerant insect can recover from being frozen at temperatures of minus 388 degrees Fahrenheit. The insects could be picked up in the clothing or supplies of your unwitting characters and become active when body heat thaws them out. On the Insect Records site, you can find information on insects capable of surviving 1360 meters underwater and plenty of other crawly facts just begging to enliven your gaming sessions.

If your gaming group appreciates monster illustrations as much as they should, you'll want to visit the Dennis Kunkel microscopy site at <http://www.denniskunkel.com/default.asp>. This site has hundreds of pictures of potential monsters (okay, scientific subjects) photographed under an electron microscope. The education site has some basic information for students. Select the arachnid photos and take a look at

the dust mite (file g2597B). The education page gives us the cheery news that they eat dead skin and are found in your house, your bed and on your pillow. (Imagine what a "dire" dust mite might eat!) See <http://www.denniskunkel.com/PublicHtml/WANTED/BODIES/g2611-Rap.html> for even more information on this potential character killer.

Kunkel's zoom-in page allows you to see an ant's compound eye magnified 480 times, among other things. If nothing else, you should be able to use these photos to improve your descriptions for your players. The characters won't appreciate the fine details of your description when they are so much bigger than the insects. It would be so much more interesting if the PCs were insect sized. Your best approach is to convince the players that they want to be shrunk—possibly an NPC was transformed into a bug and the heroes must rescue her. The setup is easier in a modern campaign (a miniature robot escapes), but it's harder to explain shrinking the characters.

It's been a while since we looked at a good base for a villain, so take a look at <http://www.japar.demon.co.uk/>. This bunker was constructed during the cold war to house regional government authorities in England in the event of a nuclear war. The large antenna mast is the only outward sign of the facility. A small bungalow hides the entrance to the bunker. The informative site offers a "virtual tour" and provides a good idea of the necessities of such an installation. Especially appropriate for our purposes is the complete BBC studio, so the villain can issue his demands on national TV.

Bolt and Quiver

by Stan!



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News from the Top

The RPGA Update

Well, here we are, home again after another hugely successful WINTER FANTASY™. Once again, the RPGA proved that it can run a magnificent, multi-day, role-playing event packed with gaming, socializing and much, much more. I feel I must congratulate all those involved for once again running our own premier event to such exacting standards. Well done, one and all!

For those who didn't attend, take a tip. Ensure you don't miss it next year, and be sure to book early. I'd also like to thank all those who wished me well in my taking over from David Wise as head of global RPGA operations. David did some amazing work in helping truly globalize this Network and establish new, exciting programs—programs and structures that I will look forward to perpetuating and developing further over my time in the hot seat. I am sorry I never got chance to sit down with everyone for a private chat at WINTER FANTASY, but I am available on email at all times. Feel free to drop me a line to discuss things further. My email door is always open at ianr@wizards.com.

Since it's simply impossible for all RPGA members to attend Winter Fantasy, I would like to recap some of the points I touched upon at the members' meeting. I won't print my total, rambling speech, for which I'm sure you'll all be grateful, but just the salient highlights that have an impact globally. Globally? Yes globally! All these initiatives have been developed so that we can provide them around the world.

Firstly, we are revamping and launching a new GM sanctioning program. This is to ensure we increase the standard of the games that you, the members, deserve. The program will have significant rewards attached to it; with the rewards getting incrementally greater the higher you qualify. This system was so developed to reward those GMs that run a lot of amazing games for us around the world and make RPGA Network games a special cut above the normal gaming experience. At the same time, we're not developing a system that excludes anyone, as we have a training program that allows anyone to attain higher judge levels, as well. As with all our new initiatives, full details of this program will be available on the wizards.com/rpga site.

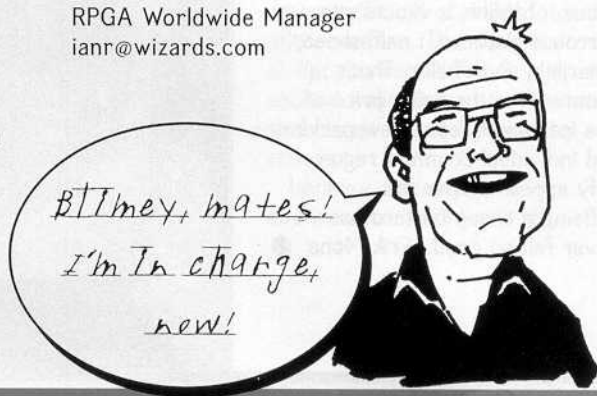
Secondly, we will be putting in place a new system of Regional Directors and Area Coordinators to help provide local support around the world and provide more events for you to take part in. Again I'm not going to go into huge detail about who these people

are and what they will be asked to do, as this information will be available on the above website. We are, of course, always interested to hear from individuals interested in helping us develop the RPGA and the hobby within their countries. If you're interested in helping to coordinate local activity, the person to contact is Sean Connor, at seanc@wizards.com.

Thirdly, I will state that we are not, at this time, intending to launch any new LIVING™ campaign or systems for the forthcoming year. Instead, we'll improve the quality and frequency of the games you have been calling for over the last 12 months—LIVING GREYHAWK™, LIVING FORCE™, and a portfolio of member-run campaigns. It seems that we have created juggernauts that you can't get enough of, so we will build on their success and remain focused on providing more of what you want. Until we feel we are done developing these campaign environments, it would be ridiculous to launch anything new. Again, details on all of our LIVING campaigns are available on the website.

I'd like to close this edition of *News from the Top* with a very special, personal and final thank you. That must go to Robert Wiese. For many years Robert has been an essential part of the staff here and at one time the ONLY member of the staff. He has kept things going through thick and thin times and his moving on will leave a vacuum that will not be easy to fill. I hope you will all join with me in wishing him the very best for the future and a huge vote of thanks. Thankfully, Robert won't be dropping off the RPGA radar completely as he intends to remain part of our LIVING campaigns and will continue to help us with events and conventions—an RPGA devotee until the end. Way to go, Robert!

Ian Richards
RPGA Worldwide Manager
ianr@wizards.com

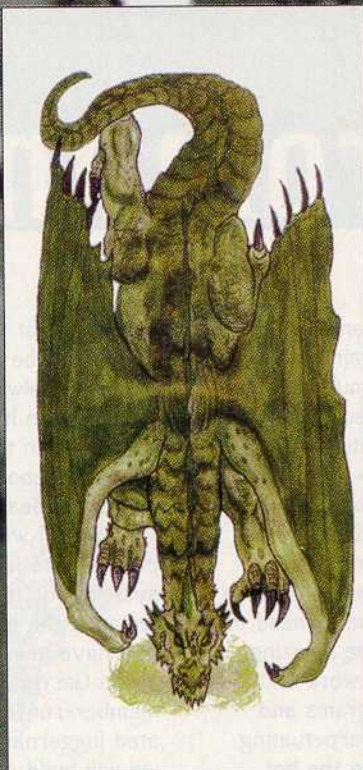


spend a fortune to get it? Head over to www.dragon-scalecounters.com for an always-expanding selection of counters especially designed for fantasy d20 campaigns. Dragon Scale Counters allows you to pick and choose any of about 140 distinct counters, and the variety is simply staggering. Need a destrachan? Check. How about a gargantuan kraken? Check. Two scared little kids holding hands? Yep, you can get that, too.

Prices range from \$0.25 (that's right, a quarter) for medium-size creatures such as beholders and chokers, \$0.50 for stuff like ankhegs, griffons, and owlbeats, and a staggering four bucks for an impressive gargantuan black dragon. All full-color images are shown from an eagle's eye point of view—you look down on Dragon Scale Counters much like you would a miniature, which means they'll mix well with what lead you do have. The illustrations range from decent to mediocre, but let's face it—if your painted miniatures look anything like ours, you've got no right to be an art critic. All counters are printed on a durable bit of thin plastic that ought to resist stains from Dorito fingers and spilled Mountain Dew.

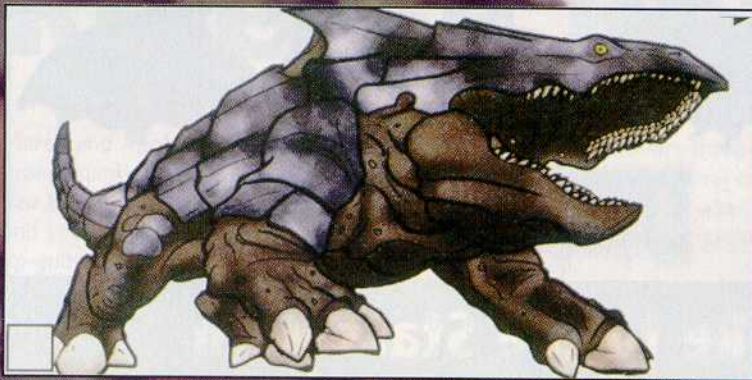
If you're looking to stock up on hordes of creatures, Dragon Scale also offers packs of assorted counters for \$5.95. The Huge Evil Dragons pack comes packed with five dragons. The Abyssal Entourage pack comes with 3 dretch, 1 succubus, 1 bebilith, 2 vrocks, 3 hezrou, 1 glabrezu, 1 nalfeshnee, 1 marilith, and 1 balor. That's 14 counters for the going price of one lead gnoll, folks. New packs and individual counters regularly appear on the site.

Being a cheap bastard has never felt so good.—Erik Mona



Dragon Scale
Counters





Fiery Dragon
Productions



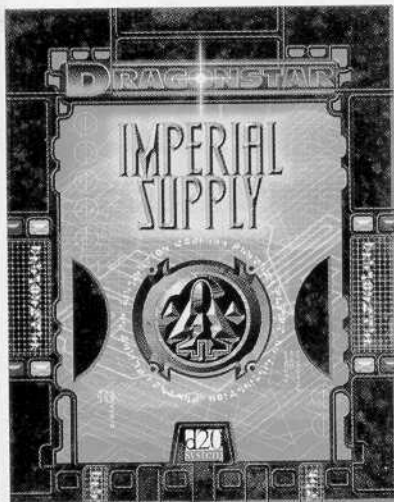
Stuff We Like Counters for Cheapskates

The tactical precision of the d20 System all but requires tracking combat with miniatures of some kind. But with prices for individual minis seldom falling below three dollars, filling out your monstrous armies has become a pricey proposition. Two d20 companies have come to the rescue of frugal DMs with inexpensive counters for use specifically with d20 fantasy games.

Fiery Dragon Productions was first on the scene with the *Counter Collection*, a selection of more than 400 character images and monster tokens, all drawn by artist Claudio Pozas and reproduced on non-perforated thin cardboard stock. Pozas brings a comic book innocence to the denizens of the d20 world that accentuates their defining features, pulling great character out of such creatures as manticores, blue dragons, storm giants, bulettes, and more. Though rife with nice features like familiars and various character types, "staple" creatures, such as orcs and goblins, are conspicuously absent.

The dearth of savage humanoids isn't such a problem, as many such creatures appear in Fiery Dragon's half-dozen released d20 System adventures, all of which contain counters. The *Counter Collection* retails for \$14.95. A second collection should be on shelves as this issue hits the stands.

Looking for a specific counter but don't want to



Fans of the fantasy-laced science fiction setting *Dragonstar* will want to check out *Imperial Supply*, the first sourcebook for the popular line. *Imperial Supply* presents complete descriptions and illustrations of new weapons, armor, vehicles, starships, and high tech gear, as well as detailed rules on how to design your own ships.

Fast Forward Entertainment

Feel like kickin' it old school? TSR-era gurus Jim Ward, Lester Smith, and Tim Brown have 160-page hard-bound books to offer in both March and April. First up is *Treasure Quests*, a collection of short adventures based around obtaining magic items (just like in the olden days). In April, Fast Forward follows up with *Wondrous Magic Items*, a really big book detailing, you guessed it, wondrous magic items. To add an interesting twist, actual props of the items described in the book will be available for purchase from Fast Forward, we assume based upon how much xp it cost to make them in the first place.

Fiery Dragon Productions

In March, Fiery Dragon Productions presents us with an interesting math problem. Big friggin' adventure about drow + *Dungeon Master's Guide* author Monte Cook = X. The *Polyhedron* staff spent most of its high school math classes reading



Take to the Stars with LIVING DRAGONSTAR!

The most anticipated d20 System release since the advent of the license has come to the RPGA Network with *LIVING DRAGONSTAR*, a new member-run shared world tabletop RPG campaign in the spirit of *LIVING CITY* and *LIVING GREYHAWK*. Fantasy Flight Games's *Dragonstar* offers players access to a "boundless universe of magic and machine, science and sorcery."

The *LIVING DRAGONSTAR* campaign takes place in the isolated Rimward Barrens recently brought into the Empire under the expansionist policies of the new Emperor, the great red wyrm Mezzenbone. *LIVING DRAGONSTAR* characters can be Imperial citizens savvy with the most modern technology, traders, merchants, and explorers in search of adventure, or denizens of wild, tech-less planets who have only heard stories of moving lights in the sky—or perhaps not even that. Characters find themselves thrust into a world where science exists beside magic, and must hurry to learn what they can lest they get swept up in a great cultural and technological revolution.

For more information on the RPGA's newest campaign, visit www.fantasyflightgames.com.

old D&D manuals, but it seems clear even to us that X = lots of dead characters and overflowing buckets of money for Fiery Dragon Productions. Get in on the action by picking up *Queen of Lies*, a 48-page adventure that features a hidden temple, stolen treasure, and a secretive cult of dark elves.

Green Ronin Publishing

March sees the debut of Green Ronin's ambitious *Master Class* series of sourcebooks, each of which will detail a new basic class for the d20 System. Steven Kenson's *Shaman's Handbook* is first out of the gate. Future releases in the line include the *Monster Slayer's Handbook*, by Runequest creator Steve Perrin, the *Witch's Handbook* (also by Kenson), and the *Assassin's Handbook*, by Wolfgang Baur, which presents the assassin as a complete

class that players may choose from character creation.

Mongoose Publishing

The prolific publishers of the popular *Slayer's Guides* march ever closer to the necessity of a *Slayer's Guide to Riding Dogs* with the March release of the *Slayer's Guide to Sahuagin*. New tricks for sneaky characters is the order of the day in the *Quintessential Rogue*, and we predict massive amount of possibilities for bloodshed with *Skraag: City of the Orcs*, also available in March.

April sees the continuation of the *Encyclopedia Arcane* series that began with *Demonology*. Prospects of the latest installment, *Constructs*, which has the *Polyhedron* staff giggling over the possibility of creating mechanical wind-up friends for ourselves, appear to be very strong, at least in this office.

Release Roundup

March and April see a torrent of brand spanking new products for the **d20 System**. Keep your eyes peeled and your wallets greased for these up-and-coming offerings.

Adamant Entertainment

Right up until presstime, the publishers of the *Skull & Bones* d20 pirate game and campaign setting were planning to release a product in March called *The Tao of Wuxia*, which promised a 96-page in-depth treatment of the type of Asian kung-fu movies that inspired *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Then, a curious note appeared on their website, saying their entire 2002 catalogue was under review pending negotiations for two licenses. Licenses are great, and all, but we wanted us some chop-socky. Keep a look on www.adamant.rpg.net for news on the company's mysterious dealings.

Alderac Entertainment Group

Ever feel the bestial urge to run a monster PC? AEG offers a helping paw in April with *Monsters*, the sixth in a line of single-word-titled sourcebooks for the **d20 System** (others include *Dungeons*, *Evil*, and *Undead*). The *Farscape* d20 RPG, originally announced for a September 2001 release, remains vaporware.

Atlas Games

Matt Forbeck has written a whole lot of **d20 System** Material, including large portions of Green Ronin's *Freeport: The City of Adventure*. If you enjoyed Matt's work on just one fantasy city, you'll want to check out his design skills in Atlas's *Seven Cities*, a 128-page *Penumbra*-imprint sourcebook in the tradition of February's *Seven Strongholds*.

Avalanche Press

Fans of historical roleplaying and enormous breasts will have much to cheer about in March and April, as

Avalanche Press delivers three historical sourcebooks featuring covers that won't embarrass you when you're preparing for your game at the porn shop.

Doom of Odin, a 64-page sourcebook for the *Ragnarok: Tales of the Norse Gods* campaign setting, offers prestige class rules for valkyries, Viking skalds, and berserkers, as well as information on the homelands of dwarves and giants.

In March, *Face of the Divine* puts Earth religions on overdrive, offering d20 details on a huge diversity of faiths, including Buddhism, Celtic Theism, Hindu, Islam, Orthodox Christianity, and more. Regular old Christianity, it appears, might manage to stave off official d20 treatment for another brave year.

Though Ragnarok takes center stage, Avalanche appears to understand that gods killing each other is not a phenomenon unique to Scandinavia. April sees the release of *Nile Empire: War in Heliopolis*, which embroils PCs in a plot by the god Seth against his brother, Osiris.

Bastion Press

FORGOTTEN REALMS guru Steven Schend takes a turn at Bastion's "d20 Guide" dartboard in March, and he's managed to come away with a green thumb. Schend's 96-page *d20 Guide to Alchemy and Herbalists* promises to teach your characters how to turn lead into gold, create powerful new magic items and substances (paid for, we assume, with fake philosopher's stone gold), and throw together impressive talismans.

Chaosium

Continuing their support of *Dragonlords of Melniboné*, one of the first complete **d20 System** games to market, Chaosium enters March with *Cults of Law and Chaos*, a 192-page treatise on the religions of Elric's world written by Gareth Michael Skarka.

Chaosium hasn't forgotten it's Elder God bread and butter, either. The House that Cthulhu Built is hard at work on *Pulp Cthulhu: Reckless Adventures in the 1930s*, a supplement for the *d20 Cthulhu* rules recently published by Wizards of the Coast (the book will include rules for the traditional *Call of Cthulhu* game, as well). *Pulp Cthulhu* will offer an action-oriented approach to battling alien gods while attempting to maintain your sanity, with information on how to create secret societies dedicated to fighting Mythos horrors and a selection of such societies for easy insertion into your campaign.

At presstime, Chaosium remained mum about a release date. Keep your eyes on *First Watch* for more details as they develop.

Eden Studios

Cliché or not, taverns play a pretty critical role in just about every fantasy **d20 System** campaign. But what happens when your players decide to visit a bar you haven't prepared for? You pick up *Waysides: The Book of Taverns*, that's what. With detailed floor plans, information on proprietors and frequent customers, and even complete menus and prices for more than 30 distinct taverns and inns, *Waysides* might just be the most important travel guide you'll pick up all year.

Fantasy Flight Games

FFG's *Traps & Treachery* debuted at last year's GEN CON to tremendous buzz and a quick sell-through. In April, *T&T* gets a kid brother with the release of *Traps & Treachery II*, another collection of devious magical traps, new magical and mundane poisons, dungeon challenges, and puzzles. This time around, FFG promises a greater emphasis on outdoor and wilderness traps. Best add some skill points to Search and Disable Device while you still have the chance, friends.

POLY: How did you get started working with d20 companies?

MEARLS: My first exposure to d20 came as a result of my work on the RPGA's LIVING GREYHAWK™ campaign. I did some design work for the Kingdom of Keoland and was sent a pre-release copy of the rules to help me handle that. I'm probably one of the few people outside of the play-testers and Wizards of the Coast who knows about the Intuit Danger skill!

Anyway, with that head start and the pressure to make sure I knew the d20 rules well enough to run GREYHAWK games at GEN CON 2000, it didn't take much footwork to find venues for my work. I had previously done design work on Atlas Games's *Feng Shui* and *Unknown Armies* RPGs. I asked them if they were doing d20 stuff, they said yes, I sent a proposal, and *voila*—I was published.

Out of the d20 publishers I've worked with, I hooked up with all but one by sending them a sample of my work and asking if they were looking for freelancers. Finding work is definitely a matter of getting out there and looking for it.

The most important advice I can give is threefold: find a game you love, start writing at least 1000 words a day to practice, and don't be afraid to go to a company's web site, read over their submission guidelines, and send something in. Magazines such as *Polyhedron*, *Dragon*, and *Dungeon* are all excellent venues for starting designers.

POLY: Who's your favorite game designer, and why?

MEARLS: Good question, and not an easy one to answer. RPGs are highly collaborative ventures, and it's often impossible to peg a single person with the innovations in a game's mechanics or setting. I'd have to say Jared Sorensen, a guy who maintains a web site at www.memento-mori.com. He puts together all sorts of interesting game concepts, completely off-the-wall stuff that defies easy categorization. We're collaborating on some stuff now that I hope pushes d20 in some exciting new directions. The way I see it, a game designer's job is to produce material that the average DM wouldn't think of. Otherwise, why

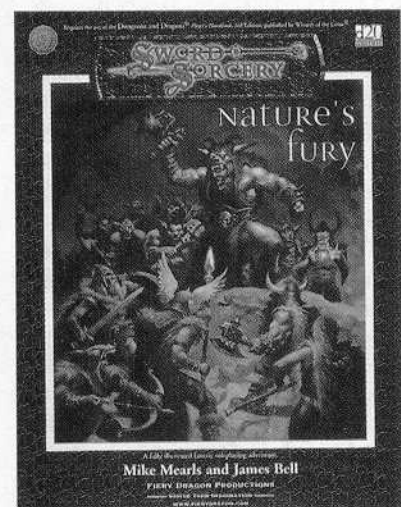
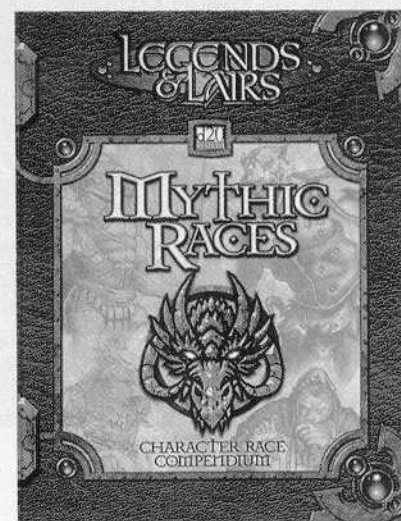
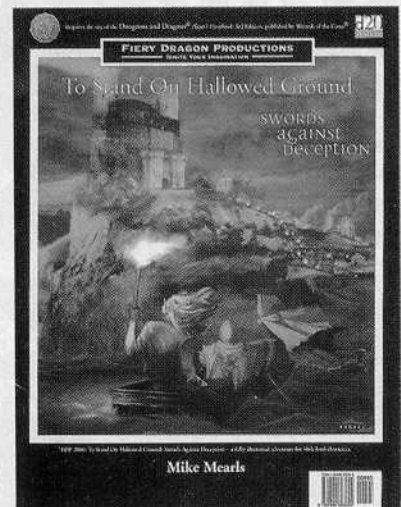
should gamers pay for stuff that they can come up with in a half-hour? Jared continuously tries to push games in new directions, and he's the kind of person that really charges up my creativity when we get together to talk games.

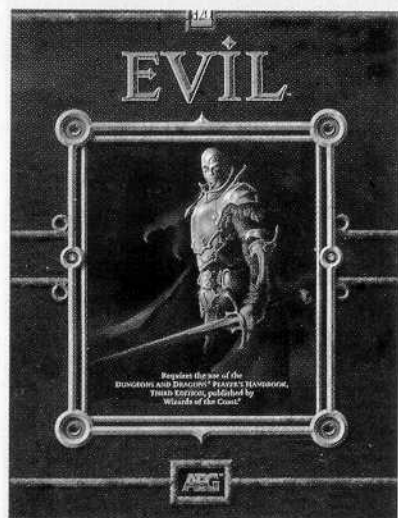
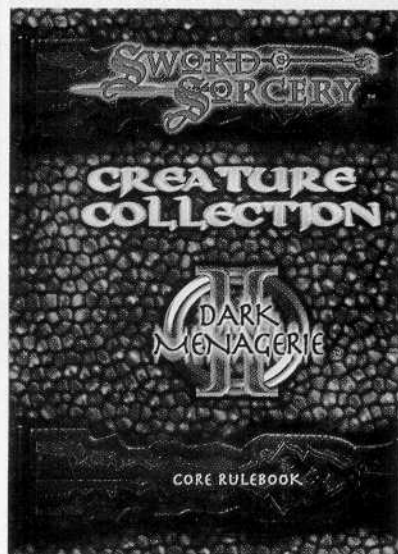
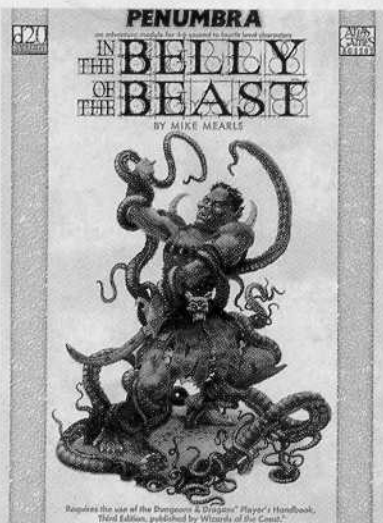
Shigeru Miyamoto is another guy I dig. He works for Nintendo, producing games like *Super Mario Brothers* and *Mario 64*. Like Jared, he takes completely bizarre concepts and produces truly unique, original games. If you look at *Super Mario Brothers* from a pure concept level, it's such a weird game. You're a fat, Italian plumber from Brooklyn who jumps on top of mushrooms and turtles. But the game play is so well done, and the visuals so engaging that the game helped make Nintendo a household name. I also have to mention the design team at Bungie Studios for making incredible games. *Halo* is the best first person shooter, and probably one of the best games of any type, that I've ever played.

POLY: What's your d20 dream project?

MEARLS: I have the d20 systems and basic setting put together for a game called *Zero Trigger*. All I need now is a publisher. It's a d20-based game built around a combination setting/ campaign that traces the characters' climb from starting adventurers trying to preserve their village to greater gods who have to fight to save the universe. It's very epic, and has lots of options for playing all sorts of bizarre characters. You can pretty much elect to play any humanoid race from the *Monster Manual* as a PC. The game is designed to accommodate characters who begin at around eighth level and progress up to godhood. Of course, considering the enemies they're going up against, they're probably a little under-powered to start out with.

I'd like to see more d20 games like *Dragonstar* or *Weird Wars*—ones that deviate from what we've seen before. My rule of thumb is that if in the 80's Fantasy Games Unlimited covered a topic, I'm probably not too crazy about doing it myself. The barriers to entry in RPG publishing are low enough and the investments small enough that there's no reason why d20 publishers can't try doing completely crazy, far out games.





The Polyhedron Interview: Mike Mearls

Grab a product off the "d20 Shelf" at your local games retailer, and chances are pretty strong that Mike Mearls had something to do with it. Since his first d20 adventure, Atlas's *In the Belly of the Beast*, Mearls has written or contributed to more than twenty d20 adventures or supplements from eight different publishers. To put that into perspective, Mike Mearls has more pages of signed contracts with d20 companies than some d20 companies have published altogether.

Clearly, the man is onto something.

Polyhedron recently had a chance to talk to the hobby's most prolific freelancer, asking him about how he broke into the scene, who he looks to for creative influence, and where he'd like to take the d20 System. His answers may surprise you.

POLY: What does Mike Mearls bring to a d20 project?

MEARLS: I think my biggest asset is that I'm a D&D player and DM first and foremost, and a game designer second. D&D has always been and always will be my favorite RPG. A lot of designers come into the industry looking to get their game published and do other stuff, like d20 material, as a sort of sideline to their main goals. I've always just wanted to work on D&D material. As a result, I have a good feel for the core d20 mechanics and what works in the average D&D game.

There's a tremendous difference between reading the rules and using

them in play. I'd have to credit my experience running convention games as a member of the RPGA Network with helping me learn how the rules work. A lot of d20 publishers jumped into the field without doing their homework. There's been more than a few times that I've had to quote chapter and verse from the rulebook to an editor who was convinced I had the mechanics wrong. The other important part of playing the game is you get a feel for what rules help enhance the game.

For example, most trap design rules focus on building elaborate stuff, the kinds of traps you'd find in *Tomb of Horrors*, or something. However, almost every time I've DMed or played in a game where making a trap came up, it always revolved around making simple stuff, like tripwires that ring alarm bells strung up around a party's camp site. When I went to work on a trap design system for Mongoose's *Quintessential Rogue*, I made sure to focus on rules for that sort of thing.

I also try not to let d20 hit a creative rut. I love taking the core D&D systems and stereotypes and twisting them around. I don't like adventures that have lame encounters. Anyone out there can make a dungeon room that has three orcs standing around, guarding it. That's boring, and offering that as an acceptable published product is offensive to gamers out there. They deserve better for their money. I strive to craft each encounter into a unique, challenging experience.

d20 System Credits: Mike Mearls

AEG *Dragons, Dungeons, Evil, Undead, War* (early 2002), *Folnar's Dagger* (mini-module), *Hell's Reach* (early 2002) Atlas Games *In the Belly of the Beast*, *Touched by the Gods* Fantasy Flight Games *Mythic Races, Daggers at Midnight* (mini-module), *Darwell's Tower* (mini-module), *Seafarer's Handbook* (January 2002) Fiery Dragon Productions *To Stand On Hallowed Ground, Nature's Fury*, Psionics Toolkit (March 2002) Hobgoblynn Press/Pagan Publishing *Godlike* (January 2002) Mongoose Publishing *Quintessential Rogue* (February 2002), *Quintessential Wizard* (mid-2002) Necromancer Games *Siege of Durgam's Folly* Sword & Sorcery Studios *Relics and Rituals, Creature Collection II, Scarred Lands Ghelspad Hardcover* (mid-2002)

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

Leads d20 Superhero Team

In order for a game system to be truly "universal," it must be robust enough to handle a multitude of genres. Since the birth of the roleplaying hobby, the superhero genre has posed the greatest challenges to designers. The list of "classic" superhero games is dwarfed by the list of systems that utterly fail the subject matter. With the inherent difficulty of creating rules for a heroic world in which literally anything is possible, the release of Nightshift Games's excrable *The Foundation: A World in Black and White* shortly after the inception of the d20 License didn't speak well for the genre's chances in the d20 arena.

More than a year later, we've seen nearly a half-dozen announcements for d20 superhero games from a variety of publishers undaunted by the creative failure of the industry's first juvenile stab at making men in tights and capes fly with the same game system that powers DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. The most interesting of these new systems may be Green Ronin Publishing's *Mutants & Masterminds*, billed by publisher Chris Pramas as "the first serious superhero RPG for the d20 System."

Bold words, considering the buzz Hobgoblynn Press's *Godlike* superhero RPG has been generating in print and online, but Pramas has never been one to back away from a challenge. His Origins Award-winning adventure, *Death in Freeport*, was one of only two d20 System adventures available at GEN CON the same day the Third Edition *Player's Handbook* went on sale—before the license had been officially approved and long before releasing a quickie d20 product was the industry-approved method of generating

quick and easy capital. Pramas insists *Mutants & Masterminds* is in a different league than *Godlike*.

"*Godlike* isn't a d20 game," Pramas says. "It's got its own system, with an added d20 appendix. *Mutants & Masterminds* is being designed from the ground up as a superhero game, not adapted from previously existing mechanics. *Godlike*'s got that whole post-modern, post-Alan Moore thing going on. It's not meant to provide a system for four-color comic characters. *Mutants & Masterminds* will."

Pramas tapped acclaimed designer Steve Kenson, whom fans may recognize from the pages of *Dragon Magazine* and the *Shadowrun* game and novel lines, to handle the design chores. Kenson is no stranger to the genre, having contributed to *Champions*, *Aberrant*, *Marvel Super-Heroes*, and West End's *DC Universe RPG*.

Unlike many superhero RPGs, *Mutants & Masterminds* won't be tied to an established comics universe. "The problem with many of the previous superhero games," Pramas insists, "is that they focused on playing specific characters from existing comics. That can be fun for a one-shot, but who wants to play someone else's character for a whole campaign?"

Mutants & Masterminds will instead focus on providing a toolkit to help gamers make their own characters. The game will handle powers somewhat like feats, focusing on a freedom to mix and match feats to a greater degree than offered in the core d20 System rules. "You should be able to build nearly any power when the system is complete," Pramas says. "The idea is to give you the flexibility of the *Champions* RPG without the unnecessary complexity."

d20 Supers Rogue's Gallery

Here's a quick rap sheet on d20 supers games of the past, present, and future.

The Foundation: A World in Black and White

Who: Published by Nightshift Games (Crunchy Frog Enterprises), written by Eric Metcalf.

What: A shoddy, rushed-to-press effort featuring fan-fic that glorifies victimization by rape as a method of "triggering" super powers, information on superheroines' breast sizes alongside game statistics, and a selection of art by people you've never heard of and probably won't hear from again.

When: Available on discount shelves the world over.

Godlike

Who: Published by Hobgoblynn Press/Pagan Press, written by Greg Stolze and Dennis Detwiler with d20 rules by Mike Mearls.

What: Metahuman "talents" on both sides collide on the battlefields of World War II. A unique RPG with a special d20 appendix.

When: Right about now.

D20 Superheroes

Who: Natural 20 Press (www.d20reviews.com), written by Russell Morrissey and Harold Nichols.

What: "Generic" superhero rules usable in any d20 campaign from the webmaster of the most important d20 fan site on the Internet. Published in electronic pdf format.

When: March, 2002.

Mutants & Masterminds

Who: Published by Green Ronin Publishing, written by Steve Kenson.

What: A "baseline" set of rules for generating original superheroes coupled with a portable city campaign setting (*a la Freeport*).

When: Fall, 2002.

Living City's New Era

In late 2001, the OrganizedPlay Corporation (led by d20 guru Ryan Dancey) licensed the RPGA Network's popular LIVING CITY™ campaign from Wizards of the Coast. Set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, LIVING CITY is a shared-world tabletop DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® campaign that charts the history of the city Ravens Bluff, an adventurer's Mecca besieged by demonic plots, crafty ambassadors, and literally thousands of unique adventures. Until recently, it's been a little unclear what OrganizedPlay planned to do with the campaign.

That changed in December, when Dancey announced an arrangement between OrganizedPlay and former FORGOTTEN REALMS Brand Manager Jim Butler's Bastion Press (publisher of the d20 product *Minions: Fearsome Foes*). Under the terms of the partnership, Bastion will create scenarios for use in LIVING CITY play. Each month, Bastion will deliver five scenarios: one for low-level characters, three for a wide range of character levels, and a fifth for high-level characters. For the time being, members should continue to order scenarios as normal from the RPGA web site. Eventually, ordering of LIVING CITY

Bastion Press is at work converting existing scenarios to bolster the supply of ready-to-play Third Edition LIVING CITY adventures.

scenarios will transfer to www.organizedplay.com.

For now, Bastion is at work converting existing scenarios to bolster the supply of ready-to-play Third Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures. The first completely new Bastion scenarios are scheduled to debut at *Weekend in Ravens Bluff* events, held at various locations around the world in April.

The most radical change to the campaign, however, has nothing to do with who's writing the adventures. Beginning in February of this year, OrganizedPlay initiated a new business model for LIVING CITY participation that shifts costs away from event organizers and toward the players directly. As in the past, any person with a valid RPGA membership is allowed to participate in LIVING CITY events. In addition, a new "Living City

Organization" has been created. Players who are not a member of this organization will not be able to play characters above 1st level.

Participation in the LIVING CITY Organization will take three forms:

- A "Gold Level" membership, which will allow unlimited play of LIVING CITY scenarios for one year at no additional cost, for a fee of \$30.00 (US).
- A "Silver Level" membership, which will allow unlimited play of LIVING CITY scenarios for three months at no additional cost, for a fee of \$10.00 (US).
- A "Bronze Level" membership, which will require a one-time \$5.00 set-up fee and entitles players to use characters above 1st level at a price of \$1.00 per scenario play. The \$1.00 fee will be charged after a scenario's results have been processed.

Gold and Silver Level memberships which lapse without renewal automatically become Bronze Level memberships (without the need to pay the \$5.00 set-up fee). Joining the LIVING CITY Organization requires a quick trip to the LIVING CITY website at www.livingcity.organizedplay.com. Members receive a printable temporary membership card upon joining, and receive an official LIVING CITY Player ID Card through the mail shortly thereafter. For more information on the new organization, head over to the official Organized Play website.



First Watch

Previews, notes & news on the world of d20 gaming

D&D Goes Modern

Mist clings to the darkness of a city alleyway. The crumbling walls of derelict tenements cast unsettling shadows on the cracked pavement beneath your feet. Somewhere in the distance, a young voice cries out, reminding you yet again that the city is no place for a child. Your eyes catch a hint of movement up ahead, and suddenly, something rises from its refuge behind a pile of sour-smelling garbage. The great, bulbous sphere floats slowly from its resting place, refuse slaking off its form like dead skin, revealing ten great eye stalks and a central ocular orb. What do you do?

You shoot the poor bastard with your Uzi, that's what.

In October, 2002, Wizards of the Coast brings *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* into the 21st Century with *D20 MODERN*®, a major new product line that provides a baseline of rules that will arm players with everything they need to run contemporary fantasy campaigns. *Shadow Chasers*, the Mini-Game contained in this very issue of *Polyhedron*, offers an in-depth preview of one possible modern fantasy setting, but *D20 MODERN* itself will contain four campaign models to choose from, as well as providing a basic rules structure adaptable to hundreds more.

Designed by Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, and Rich Redman, the *D20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* is, at its heart, a rulebook. It's similar to *D&D* in that it presents a heroic-style game in which the player characters really make a difference in

their campaign world. It differs in that it has a more contemporary feel thanks to the types of equipment, classes, and prestige classes it offers. *Shadow Chasers* gives some idea at the type of rules changes in store for modern fantasy fans. Other products will follow throughout 2003.

The *D20 MODERN* game uses the vitality and wound points system first introduced in the *STAR WARS Roleplaying Game* to better reflect the damage potential of contemporary weapons. The game starts characters in more basic classes than in *D&D*, allowing them to grow and specialize relatively quickly into a number of prestige classes appropriate for the GM's chosen campaign model. As with any *d20 System* game, if you know how to play *D&D*, you'll know how to play *D20 MODERN*.

"The time is right to expand our offerings as



far as the *d20 System* is concerned," says Slavicsek. "While *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* handles medieval fantasy quite nicely, we believe we need to represent the basic rules and provide some additional mechanics to take into account items and situations

available in the modern world. We also want to offer the new rules to the *d20* community so that other companies can build upon these rules and widen the scope of available modern-era products."

And readers of *Polyhedron* can help make it happen. "*Shadow Chasers* is one example of a campaign that can be played with the *D20 MODERN RPG*. It's an early version of the material that will appear in updated and expanded form in the final *D20 MODERN* rulebook. As time permits, we'll incorporate any feedback on *Shadow Chasers* that *Polyhedron* readers provide via the Wizards of the Coast website." Let us know what you think of the game by visiting our *d20 System* message boards at <http://www.wizards.com/community/main.asp?x=boards,3>.

For Slavicsek, the most exciting aspect of re-imagining *D&D* for the modern era has been fiddling with the way the game approaches classes. All of the basic character types from *Shadow Chasers* will be present in the final version of the game, along with a new class for heroes with high Constitution scores. The main rulebook will contain about 16 prestige classes.

"I think players will be most excited about the ability to create any type of hero they want to play. The only restrictions are those instituted by the campaign model they're playing in. In some contemporary fantasy settings, players will get to choose between magical spells, high-powered firearms, or some combination of the two. In more realistic settings, they can work to make the best unarmed combat specialist, sharpshooter, scientist, or super-spy," Slavicsek says with a grin. "Me, I can't wait to have my hero use an enchanted Uzi against a horde of zombies in a *Shadow Chasers* campaign."

The New Polyhedron

In the three years I've worked at Wizards of the Coast, I've been involved in no fewer than four magazine launches or re-launches. Each creation of a new magazine or radical change to an existing one brings with it an enormous amount of mixed emotions—sadness at seeing old regular features bite the dust. Excitement about the offerings of a completely new package.

A little more than a year ago, I sat down to create a "new" *Polyhedron* that would mix the best of both the US and UK versions of the magazine. At the time, the US *Poly* was a thin, two-color affair of little ambition. It was fine, as far as newsletters go, but it wasn't blowing the socks off of anyone. In contrast, the UK version was mostly black and white with a few color pages, shiny as hell, and much beloved by its subscribers. Then, the task was to meld two magazines into a new whole. Based on subscriptions and friendly letters, I think it's fair to say that the merged *Polyhedron* (which began way back in issue 144) was a success.

By the same measurements, this latest "morph" has topped even our best expectations. Now merged with *Dungeon*, the new *Polyhedron* has expanded its coverage of the d20 industry. At first we considered calling it Wizards of the Coast's "official" d20 magazine, but the concept of claiming officiality in an open gaming atmosphere that seems more than ever to be about inclusion rather than exclusion seemed more and more ridiculous as time went by. Eventually, we settled on the tag "Definitive d20."

Definitive d20. What that means is that you can come to each issue of *Polyhedron* with an expectation that the rules and game tweaks you find here have been examined under the same editorial microscope you've come to

trust from all of Wizards of the Coast's periodicals. As the producers of the rules that underlie the system, we're committed to keeping those rules as consistent and useful as possible.

We're also committed to having a lot of fun. Each issue, we'll provide a complete d20 Mini-Game that explores new applications of the d20 System. Last issue, designer Dave Noonan gave us *Pulp Heroes*, a fun romp into the world of Indiana Jones, the Shadow, and Tarzan of the Apes. This issue, Bill Slavicsek gives us *Shadow Chasers*, your first look at a huge project called D20 MODERN (see opposite page). What's in store for next issue?

Spelljammer.

Yep, *Spelljammer*. Strip away all your preconceptions of what that word means. They don't apply, anymore. Next issue's *Spelljammer: Shadow of the Spider Moon* diverges in many, many ways from the campaign setting of the same name released by TSR more than a decade ago. Strange, alien ships still prowl the spacelanes. Mindflayer pirates still attack cargo caravans to harvest the brainstuff of their passengers. Gone are the goofy hippo men. Gone is the wonky cosmology. And best of all, there's nary a giant space hamster to be found.

Let us know what you think of this issue and where you'd like to see us take the new *Polyhedron* by sending us a note at polyhedron@wizards.com. We'd love to hear from you.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Two-Fisted Editor
Polyhedron Magazine

Bolt and Quiver

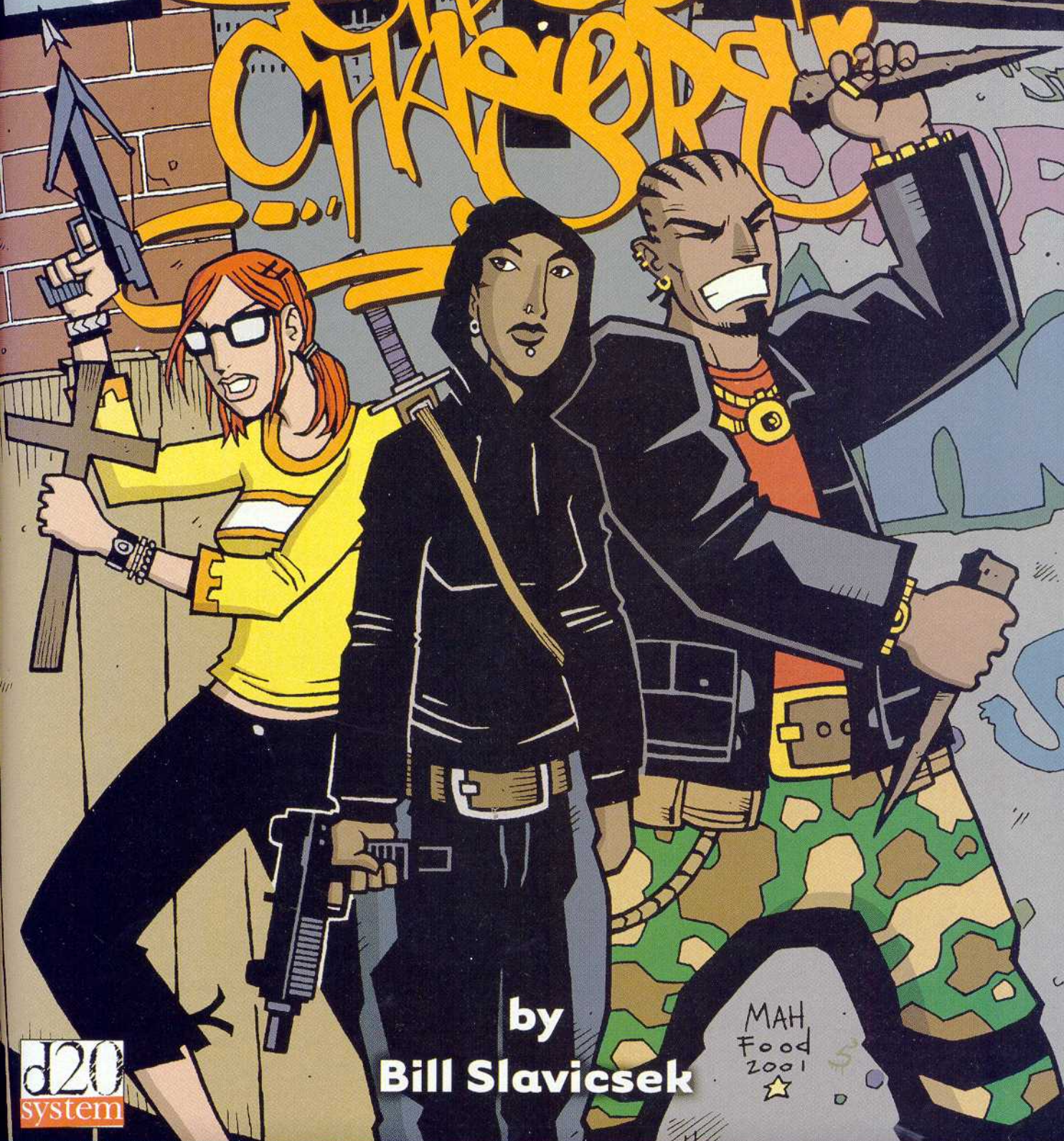
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Requires the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS *Player's Handbook*

UNSHADOWN CHAMPION



d20
system

by
Bill Slavicsek

MAH
Food
2001
★

HEROIC MODERN HORROR IN A DARKENED WORLD